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OF BRIGHTWOOD



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The Camp Fire Girls of Brightwood

*A Story of How They Kindled
Their Fire and Kept it Burning*

By
AMY E. BLANCHARD

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL



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BOSTON CHICAGO

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CAMP-FIRE GIRLS OF BRIGHTWOOD

To
The Kitchi Kimiwan Camp-Fire Girls
of
Plainfield, N. J.

Foreword

THERE are few boys who do not know something about the Boy Scouts and their splendid work. There are still many girls who have not heard of that newer, but equally helpful, organization, The Camp Fire Girls; such may find it interesting to learn from this little story just what it means, how wide its scope, how great its influence upon individual members, and how it can serve to brighten the home, develop character, sweeten life and give to the world better ideals. High adventures do not fall to the lot of many, but that commonplaces can assume their guise, and that every-day duties may rise to the height of happy performances they learn who "follow the Law of the Fire."

Those who are already Camp Fire Girls may find it interesting to read of the little group of ordinary girls in an ordinary town who discovered the existence of the organization, and of the effect it had upon all of them, bringing joy to many and changing, for the better, the life of, at least, one of them.

That the tale may encourage the faint-hearted,

inspire the indifferent, add new energy to the enthusiastic and help to build up a finer type of womanhood is the wish of

THE AUTHOR.

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Camp-Fire Girls of Brightwood

CHAPTER I

A STUPID TOWN

IT was a stupid little village; Kathleen thought it the stupidest in the world, though it really wasn't. It might have been more beautiful, one must admit, and it might have been gayer, but it had this saving grace: it admitted of possibilities, for a line of purple mountains formed its background. However, just at this date when Kathleen was calling it stupid she had not acquired perception enough to discover what might be made of it. She was only sixteen and of course one cannot expect persons of that age to know everything, although, let it be remarked in the merest whisper,—they generally believe, poor things, that they know it all.

She was just at that age when influences of the proper kind would develop all the good in her, or when influences of the wrong kind would have the opposite effect. She was proud and sensitive, yet outwardly accepted life as it came, making few outspoken com-

plaints, while telling herself sometimes that she was a blighted being, unloved and unappreciated. To be sure it was within her home circle that her moods of rebellion possessed her ; among her young friends never was girl more popular, more sweet and lovable, more responsive to appreciation, more generous in her criticisms, but at home these qualities counted for naught against the more valued ones of thrift, orderliness, and bustling energy in household affairs.

Kathleen was brushing off the front porch when she murmured to herself : " It's the stupidest place in the world. I never saw such a stupid place." It goes without saying that she never had, for she had seen very few, half a dozen at the most, so how could she tell? Spring was in the air. Already a row of daffodils curtsied to the breeze which was shaking the red maple buds to the ground.

Having swept away the last drift of maple buds, Kathleen looked up and down the long, unshaded, unlovely street. It did not invite admiration. " And there are such beautiful things in the world if one could but choose from them," she murmured. The daffodils shook with laughter at her speech and a bluebird overhead flew away with a gleeful note. To be sure it was not much of a garden for a beauty-loving bluebird to linger in, for it exhibited only the little row of

daffodils which had been planted heaven knows how long ago, and which had come up bravely year after year, doing the best they could under rather adverse circumstances. They had the company of a scraggy lilac bush and three feeble trees—the bluebird had his eye on one of the trees as a likely place for a nest,—but there really wasn't much more society for the daffodils than there was for Kathleen, only they didn't mind it so much.

Across the street it was not much better, although the drifting maple buds did come from there, and Mrs. Hovey's windows did display a row of geraniums. "It's not only stupid but it's ugly," Kathleen murmured as she turned back to the house; "I'm just sick of it all. Dust and dishes and ashes; that seems about all there is in life," the girl continued her soliloquy as she went to her next duty of dusting the parlor.

"I wonder what makes me know it is ugly," said Kathleen with a sigh. "It is what I have always been used to, but somehow it is beginning to grate on me as it didn't use to do, yet I don't know how to make it different." She rearranged the family Bible, the crimson plush album, and one or two gaily-bound books upon the marble-topped table. She took down a couple of yellowed celluloid Christmas cards from the mantel, turned a dingy cushion on the sofa and pulled down

the shades a little lower. The yellow daffodils nodded approval as they saw her face at the window, but she did not notice them.

Presently above Mrs. Hovey's scarlet blooms appeared a face, and a hand was waved, then some one opened Mrs. Hovey's front door. Kathleen went out on her own porch to receive a hail from Ray Hovey.

"Hallo, Kath," came the call.

"Hallo, Ray."

"Isn't it fine? Real springlike, isn't it? Aren't you glad winter is about over?"

"Ye-es, I suppose so," Kathleen replied a little doubtfully.

"You old grouch, what's the matter?"

"Dishes and dust and ashes," replied Kathleen grimly.

"Oh, pshaw! you got up wrong this morning." Ray ran lightly down the steps and across the street. "What's the matter?" She repeated her question as she came in the gate and stood on the lower step.

"Life's a hollow cheat; my doll is stuffed with sawdust, and 'there ain't nothin' in nothin','" Kathleen answered smiling.

"So that's the way you feel, is it?"

"Don't you sometimes, when dust and ashes and dishes get the better of you? Oh, dear, by the way

I forgot to see about the ashes. Come in, Ray, while I look."

Ray followed her into the warm, still parlor. Kathleen pulled out the pan of the heater and then shoved it back with a sigh of relief. "He did empty it after all," she exclaimed. "Auntie thought Jimmy might have forgotten to take up the ashes ; that's always his work, you know. It would have been my morning's crowning joy if I had had to do it. I loathe it more than anything else ; next I despise dusting ; third in order I detest dishes. When one follows the other in my day's work I simply get so low in my mind that I can scarcely live. What's the matter with this room ?" she asked abruptly.

Rachel looked around. "Why, I don't know. It looks just as it has always done. It is very neat and nice."

"Neat, yes ; but when that is said it is all. Would you call it pretty ?"

"Well, it looks about like ours and the rest of them, like those in all the girls' houses."

"Ray Hovey, it is hideous. It grows upon me more and more that it is hideous and I don't know under the sun how to make it any better. Don't those flowers on the wall-paper remind you of liver and mustard ? Don't those portraits of Auntie and Uncle look as if

they would like to bite you? Does that lamp-shade with those purples and greens match anything in the room? I can't pitch everything into a rubbish heap because there would be no way to buy anything better. I am perfectly ill of everything in this stupid silly place."

Ray stared. "Well, you are in a bad way, aren't you? I never knew you so violent before. What started you?"

"I don't exactly know. I suppose it is the long pent-up winter of my discontent breaking loose. I know we've got to live here, that we must take things as they are. We can't prance off to a prettier place because this is home. Somehow I feel as if all of us were trotting around in a circle over and over and over, nothing ahead, nothing behind, nothing much above, and I wonder if we've got to keep on doing it always."

Ray laughed. "I don't see what makes you so different from the rest of your family," she remarked.

"Don't say 'my family,' for my family must be my mother's people; they are continually telling me that I am like that side of the house. Oh, me, Ray, I'd like to do something wild and bold and giddy. Do you suppose we could walk along the top of the fence like that hen is doing over there at the Eckerts'?"

"That isn't very wild nor bold," returned the literal Ray, "not for the hen."

"It would be for me, but I don't think I will try. I think I will go to the blacksmith's shop and ask Peter to let me bang away at the anvil for a while to relieve my feelings. I could call the anvil the world, the hammer the strokes of fate, and the horseshoe would stand for luck."

"You wouldn't be able to lift those heavy hammers," Ray told her, far behind in the race of thought, "and it is a very good world, after all."

"For some," returned Kathleen sententiously. "I'm going, Ray. Will you come?"

Ray followed her and the two were soon watching Peter, whose every stroke brought forth a cheerful clangor as he banged away at a piece of iron. He was a sturdy, shock-headed individual, with a broad, good-natured face. He looked up at sight of the two girls, and grinned a welcome. There were no customers, so it was an opportune moment for Kathleen.

"Do you think I could do that, Peter?" she asked.

"Make a horseshoe?" Peter laughed. "I don't reckon you could unless you made it out o' dough."

"May I try?"

"Sure." He handed over his hammer with another grin.

Kathleen made an effort to lift it, to swing it and bring it down on the anvil, but did not succeed. "Haven't you a lighter one?" she asked.

"Sure," came the answer again.

This time Kathleen did manage to lift the hammer and to let it drop uncertainly on the anvil, but it was rather a futile effort. She made a second attempt, but did no better. "It's no use," she said, putting down the hammer and turning to Ray. "I can't do anything with luck, you see. I can't control fate. Do you want to try what you can do?"

Ray shook her head. "It isn't worth while to waste my strength on anything so foolish."

"There's a kind of knack about it," acknowledged Peter; "'tain't all stren'th. If you take her up so, and give her a swing this-a-way, and bring her down where you aim at, you git her, sure. Try her ag'in, Kathie."

Kathleen took up the hammer again, and this time did a little better, but the trial was all her enthusiasm needed and she gave up the tool saying: "I think I won't 'prentice myself out to learn blacksmithing, Peter, though I did want to see what it was like. Thank you for letting me."

"That's all right," returned Peter, picking up his hammer to play ten pound ten. "It takes muscle as well as knack, and I guess gals ain't got it."

"I think I'd like it if I were a man," Kathleen remarked. "Good-bye, Peter."

"Come ag'in and bring your horse; I'll shoe him real good," returned the smith.

"The only horse I'll ever have will be a clothes-horse," responded Kathleen, a remark whose quality of wit was perfectly suited to Peter, for he laughed uproariously, and they left him, the ringing strokes growing faster and more regular as he buckled down to work again.

"You see," said Kathleen, as they reached her gate, "I rather liked trying, and I feel better. It was an outlet for my feelings."

"You are a funny girl, Kath," was Ray's reply as she turned to go across the street.

She had reached the gate when Kathleen called her. "What do you say to taking a walk up the mountain this afternoon? Can you go?"

Ray paused before she answered, "Why, yes, I think so. It is probably only outdoor exercise and fresh air that you need, and you'll get plenty of that on the mountain. What time shall we start?"

"Oh, I suppose as soon as the dishes are washed."

The odors of cooking already pervaded the house as Kathleen entered. She gave a slightly contemptuous sniff and mounted the stairs to tidy up her room. She

made the bed, then stood and looked around her. Was it the coming of spring which filled her with vague longings, with this dissatisfaction of the commonplace, this distaste for the accustomed, every-day things which suddenly seemed to confront her with an unendurable ugliness ?

“I wish something lovely would happen,” said the girl to herself. “I wish I felt as peaceful and lovely inside as it looks out. I suppose I am a mean despicable wretch, but I am tired of being a worm in a chrysalis ; I want my wings.” Yet, in spite of the sigh which followed, she answered her aunt’s call with a cheerful : “Coming, Auntie,” and went down to find that it was time to set the table.

CHAPTER II

WOHELO !

RACHEL HOVEY was a little roly-poly good-natured girl, not possessing a vivid imagination, but having many qualities which recommended her as a cheerful and pleasant companion. She was always ready to laugh at difficulties, to see fun in trying situations and to help in troublesome emergencies. She and the more temperamental Kathleen were near neighbors and close friends. Rachel did not always understand Kathleen, but she was unswerving in her loyalty and gave unstinted devotion. She admired Kathleen's tall slenderness, her wavy chestnut hair and her large blue eyes. Rachel's own eyes were small twinkling gray ones; her hair was straight and of no especial color, while her figure was a series of rounds, round eyes, round nose, round face, round body, arms and legs, little pudgy hands, little dumpy feet, but, no matter, every one loved her.

Easter being earlier than usual this year the girls were having a March holiday. Rachel was making the best of it; Kathleen was trying to but was not succeed-

ing very well, yet was not enthusiastic about returning to school.

Even dingier than the houses was the school building which Kathleen and Ray passed that afternoon on the way to the mountain. It stood on a bare treeless spot, was sadly in need of paint, and even when its doors were open it did not invite one to enter; now that they were shut it looked deserted and melancholy, the girls remarked.

As they climbed higher and higher they heard cheery voices. "I wonder if some of the boys have come up," said Ray.

"It doesn't sound like boys; it sounds like girls," returned Kathleen. "Listen!"

They stood still to hear a weirdly sweet call; then there was silence.

"What a queer song," whispered Ray. "Who are they? What is it?"

For answer Kathleen beckoned silently and led the way up a path to a point beyond where smoke was rising. The two girls crouched down, parted the boughs of some bushes and looked down to see a group of girls gathered around an open fire.

"They're dressed like Indians. Do you suppose they are Indians?" whispered Ray.

"Oh, no," returned Kathleen in the same low voice; "they look like girls of our own race."

"But why dress up like that? Is it an order of Red Women something like the Red Men, do you suppose?"

"I don't know. See how well the fire burns. Look, they are all standing; I wonder what next."

As she spoke "Wohelo for aye, Wohelo for aye," was started up the cheer: "Wohelo, Wohelo, Wohelo for aye!"

"Wohelo for work, Wohelo for health,
Wohelo, Wohelo, Wohelo for love."

"Isn't it queer? What do you suppose they are up to?" Ray could not keep quiet.

"Cannot imagine, but they seem to be ready for a good time. I wonder if we ought to watch them this way."

"Why not? The mountain doesn't belong to them, does it? Besides they aren't doing anything very much, not anything they should mind our seeing. I want to watch their stunts a while. Listen, they seem to be calling a roll and every girl answers: 'Kolah.' Now they are going to read something. I can't hear what it is. Can you?"

"No, but I see some one else coming."

A little wisp of a girl came flying breathlessly up the path. The girls around the fire arose and sang a welcome. The newcomer took her place silently and the ceremonies continued.

"It beats me," whispered Ray after a little while. "They are all so serious, and yet they seem to enjoy it. The fire is in the center, you see, and it means something to have it that way. They are not just pretending, and it isn't a picnic or anything of that kind."

"It may be a college fraternity; they do all sorts of stunts when they are initiating members," returned Kathleen.

Ray craned her neck farther over. "I'd give anything to know," she said, "but I shouldn't like to hail them and ask."

"Come, let's go," said Kathleen.

"If they don't want to be seen they should go behind closed doors," declared Ray still lingering. "I am going to stay."

"And I'm not," determined Kathleen, scrambling to her feet and walking away.

"Oh, well, if you feel that way about it," remarked Ray not willing to be left and following her friend, "I'll go, too."

They crept cautiously out to seek higher ground, but before going on they stood for a moment to give a last look. The company of girls below were gravely watching one of their number who was dancing a pretty folk-dance, and the two on the crest above could not refrain

from waiting until it was finished. Then Kathleen grasped Ray's hand and they turned away silently. When they had reached the path which they meant to take Kathleen spoke. "I'd like to know. I'd like to know. Wasn't it all lovely, Ray ? It did appeal to me so much. I wish I knew what it all meant."

"Shall we go back and ask ?"

"Oh, no, that would never do. There is no college near here and yet it did appear to be a class with their teacher. That tall sweet looking woman must have been the teacher ; she was older than the rest."

"And she always stood with them. The girls were about of an age I should judge, so it might have been a class from a school or college."

"We must find out somehow. Listen !" They stopped to hear faintly wafted upward the cry of "Wohelo, Wohelo."

Taking a circuitous route they stumbled along a rough path which led them around a shoulder of the mountain and on to the top where there was a fine view. This was their final goal. The winds of March found them out when they reached the summit, but they stood for a while to look upon the fair scene.

"I'm glad we came," said Kathleen as they turned away. "It is just what I needed. It is so quiet and peaceful, and even the sighing of the wind is pleasant."

"But I'd like to know who those girls are," returned Ray.

"We'll find out, never fear," responded Kathleen. "It is pretty wet just along here, isn't it?" She stepped to one side to avoid the trickling rills.

"Take care," warned Ray; "that is a treacherous spot; it is all holes and slippery stones."

But her warning came too late, for Kathleen gave a sudden exclamation of pain and sank down on the bank by the side of the path. "Oh, dear," she cried with pale lips, "I'm afraid I have twisted my knee."

"Oh, isn't that a shame?" Ray solicitously helped her to limp to a dryer spot where an overthrown tree gave her a more comfortable seat. "Is it very bad, Kath?" she asked. "Can't you go on?"

"Perhaps I can if I rest it a little. Just let me sit here till I get over the worst twinges. It makes me rather faint."

Ray stood over her, anxiously. "Let me rub it," she offered as she knelt by her friend's side.

Kathleen submitted, but the least touch brought a smothered moan of pain though the girl bravely made the attempt to walk after resting a short time.

Ray kept her eye on her companion's face which plainly showed how she was suffering. "It's no use," declared Ray. "You must not go on. You must

stay here and I'll go for help. There must be somebody not far off. You are simply in agony, and can never walk home with that knee."

"I'm afraid I can't," Kathleen acquiesced faintly and sat down again.

"Stay right here. I'll come back as soon as I can." Then off sped Ray leaving Kathleen to the company of the birds, the singing stream, and the murmuring trees.

It seemed some time that she sat there although it was not very long before she heard voices approaching and then between the branches she saw two figures coming up the winding path. In another moment she discovered that two of the girls, in the costume of those gathered around the fire, were nearing her.

"Oh, you poor child," exclaimed the taller one as she came up, "it is too bad that you hurt yourself. How did it happen?"

"I stepped upon a loose, slippery stone, just back there a little way, and turned my knee," Kathleen told her.

The girl dropped on her knees, drew forth some bandages from the bag she carried, and proceeded carefully to examine the injured member. "It is beginning to swell quite badly. If we could only get you down to our Camp-Fire we could bathe it in hot

water; that would be the best thing for it, but I am afraid you couldn't walk so far even with help. I will bandage it, though, and that will do some good. Your friend has gone with one of the girls to get some one to come with a carriage or something to take you home."

She did the work so deftly and showed such efficiency that Kathleen wondered. "How do you know how?" she asked as she saw the neat bandage in place.

"Oh, that is part of what we must know," returned the girl with a smile.

"We? Who are 'we'?" asked Kathleen eagerly. "My friend and I saw you down there around the fire and we have been wondering about you ever since."

"We are Camp-Fire Girls," responded the girl proudly. "Did you never hear of us?"

"Never."

"Oh, then you must be told that we are a new organization, quite new, a society for girls something the same as the Boy Scouts is for boys. We don't do the same things, of course, but we try to do all that is best for girls to do. We came from the city to-day to have our first outdoor Council Fire of the season here on the mountain. We came by train to Weston and walked over. There, does that feel any better?" The girl looked up brightly from her task.

"Thank you, that certainly does. It was so good of you to come to me, and to do this."

"I am mighty glad to have been of service to you," replied the girl, rising to her feet. "I am Judy Falkner and this is my friend, Sadie Wallace. Won't you tell us your name?"

"I am Kathleen Gilman," was the response, "and I live in that little town down there, that ugly little town named Brightwood."

"What a pretty name for an ugly place," laughed Judy. "Is it so ugly, and why don't you make it pretty?"

"How can I?"

"You could help. If you had a company of Camp-Fire Girls in your town you could do a lot."

"How I do wish we had," returned Kathleen bending forward eagerly. "Tell me, do tell me how you go about it. Tell me everything. I have a confession to make first, however: my friend and I watched you for a little while. We were on the bluff and we looked down. Oh, we were so interested, and we wondered and wondered."

"Of course you did; you would have had very little curiosity otherwise."

"I am afraid I am punished for my eavesdropping," said Kathleen smiling. "I simply could not turn my

eyes away, and I heard something that was said about seeking beauty and glorifying work. It appealed to me tremendously. If I could be surrounded by beautiful things; if I could glorify my work, how much it would mean to me. Do you forgive me for eavesdropping?"

"Why, you dear thing, of course. It was perfectly natural for you to watch us. We weren't behind stone walls nor closed doors. It is really more your mountain than ours because you live at its foot and we are miles away. I think she will have to talk to Miss Keene, don't you, Sadie?" She turned to her friend.

"I certainly wish she could," said the quiet girl who had been listening.

"Miss Keene is our Guardian, you know," said Judy again turning to Kathleen.

"Guardian?"

"Yes, each Camp-Fire has a Guardian, and she is ours. She is such a dear, so helpful and sympathetic, and so full of fun. I wish you could find such a leader."

"Perhaps Miss Keene would know of some one," spoke up Sadie. "You know one of the duties is to help in forming other Camp-Fires. If you will stay here I will go and ask her to come up. It is not very far and I know she will be delighted to come, Iwatérusch." And without another word Sadie hurried off.

"She called you by such a queer name," said Kathleen wonderingly.

"That is my Indian name; it means to hope. My symbol is a rainbow. We adopt ever so many of the Indian customs because they are so picturesque."

"What does Wohelo mean? Is that Indian, too?"

"No, that is our watchword. It is formed from the first two letters of the words, Work, Health, Love. It is our cheer, just like a college yell, you know."

"I heard you give it and I liked it. I heard your singing, too."

"We learn a number of songs and sometimes we make special new ones for ourselves. Oh, there is a lot to do both indoors and out. I can't begin to tell you all."

"How long have you had your—Camp-Fire, is it?"

"Yes, that is it. We have had it about a year. I have just become a Fire Maker; first I was a Wood Gatherer, and now I am working for the rank of Torch Bearer, which is the highest."

"Can any one be a Camp-Fire Girl? I mean, does she have to pass an examination, or belong to a certain set or school?"

"Dear me, no. We are rich and poor, city and country, school girls, society girls, working girls alike. It is a sisterhood with the same standards, the same

desire to work out our own development in the best way, to become true, fine, noble women. Oh, it has meant so much to me. I wish I could tell you. Before I joined I was such a whiney, dissatisfied, hopeless sort of creature. You've no idea how silly I was."

"Were you really?"

Judy nodded, "Yes, and yet I was supposed to have everything to make me contented, but I wasn't, because I didn't care about any of the things I did. I had no vital interests. Then, one day I ran across Sadie Wallace; she is a typewriter and stenographer, you know. I'd like to tell you about that meeting but it would take too long. Well, the long and short of it was that through her I met Miss Keene and then began my good times. There they come." She broke off abruptly.

The pleasant looking young woman, whom Kathleen had seen in the center of the group of girls, now came up with Sadie.

"A sister in distress," cried Judy. "Oh, dear Miss Keene, come and tell her how to start a new Camp-Fire. We must help. This is Kathleen Gilman, Miss Keene. She has sprained her knee, you know. I have bandaged it, but I am afraid she is in for a siege, for it is pretty badly swollen."

"I am so sorry, dear child," said Miss Keene, sitting down by Kathleen's side, "but I am glad we happened

to be near at hand. Your friend told us about it. She and one of the girls have gone to a house this side of Weston where some friends of mine live. If their son is at home he can soon get here with his motor car. Does your knee pain you much?"

"Not so much as it did." Kathleen gave Judy a grateful look.

"It isn't her knee that bothers me now," put in the latter. "What we are most concerned about is how to start a new Camp-Fire in Kathleen's town. It's a very ugly one she says and she loves beautiful things. Oh, Miss Keene, do you know any one in Brightwood that would make a good Guardian?"

"Let me think. No, I'm afraid not, but one might be imported. Your question suggests a plan which maybe could be worked out. I will see about it. Hark!"

The "Honk-honk" of an automobile sounded near, then arose the cry of "Wohelo! Wohelo!" and presently around the curve in the road came a car in which sat Sadie and Ray. The car came to a standstill and the girls jumped out.

"I'll go back with you," said Miss Keene to Kathleen, "and then Fred can drop me at our Camp-Fire on his return. Hallo, Fred, so they found you."

"Yes, Miss Keene," said the young man leaving his

car and coming forward. "I was just going out with the car and they caught me in the nick of time."

"Nice boy," responded Miss Keene. "Well, you can do this for us: you can take some of us to Brightwood, and bring me back to our Camp-Fire on your return. This is Fred Furnival, girls."

"Then, if you are ready," said Fred, "I will take you as far as you want to go."

"We are going to walk," declared Judy; "it will count so much on our honors; besides Kathleen mustn't be crowded. No, we'd really rather walk, wouldn't we, Sadie? Good-bye, Kathleen and Ray. We're sure to meet again, and the next time I hope you will have become sister Camp-Fire Girls."

Then the car, with Kathleen, Ray and Miss Keene aboard, started off followed by the cry of: "Wohelo for aye, Wohelo for aye!"

It was an exciting ride for Kathleen, not only because she had rarely traveled in an automobile but because Miss Keene was a type of person quite new to her experience. Placed sociably on the back seat with this friendly, sympathetic companion, she found herself growing more and more confidential and by the time her own home was reached she discovered that she had opened her heart to this stranger as she had never dared to do to any one else. She had told of her coming to

live with her father's sister when she was but five years old, of how she did not remember her mother and had but a dim recollection of her father, of how her aunt was not unkind, but was quick-tempered, and so practical that she had no patience with one who was not.

"I understand, my dear," said Miss Keene, patting the girl's arm. "I think you need to be a Camp-Fire Girl, and if we can manage to establish a Camp-Fire here in Brightwood, you have no idea how helpful it would be. I am going to write to you, for I have been thinking out a plan and as soon as it is formulated I will let you know all about it. This shall not be our last meeting."

"You don't know how much obliged I am to you and your girls," said Kathleen as she parted from this new friend. "I am really thankful for my accident; otherwise I might never have known you and that there were such persons as Camp-Fire Girls."

"That is the way with a lot of things in this world," returned Miss Keene with a smile. "What at first looks like a misfortune often turns out to be a great blessing. But here we are, so good-bye to you both. You shall hear from me soon." And the girls watched the car whiz off, leaving them tingling with new thoughts while Miss Keene herself found plenty to think about during her ride back to the Camp-Fire.

CHAPTER III

A GUARDIAN

IN spite of her lame knee Kathleen was a most cheerful person for the next few days. As she did not allow herself to be detained at home from school, she could not be expected to be free from household duties, but this did not prevent her hopes from soaring high. She pictured all sorts of possibilities, wove all sorts of dreams, and, being a mercurial sort of somebody who had not yet learned proportions, she was as happy as she had been unhappy.

Her aunt, sharp-eyed, sharp-nosed, sharp-tongued, though not exactly unkind, was neither demonstrative nor sympathetic; she allowed few liberties and gave permission for free hours grudgingly. An afternoon once in a while was a privilege. "Time was not made to waste in chatter," said Mrs. Wyatt; visiting, therefore, was not encouraged. At the present time Mrs. Wyatt looked upon her niece's sudden flow of spirits with something like disfavor. "I declare, Kathleen," she said, "I never saw such a person; you are either

down in the dumps or foolishly volatile. Why can't you be more even-tempered ? ”

“ I don't know,” replied Kathleen, pausing in her burst of song ; “ I suppose I wasn't made that way.”

“ Made that way ; that's a poor excuse. I was made to crow and kick off my shoes like any other baby, I imagine, but that is no reason I should keep it up for the rest of my days.”

The picture of her aunt with a habit of crowing and kicking off her shoes was too much for Kathleen, and she giggled outright. Her sense of humor often saved her. A little smile flickered across Mrs. Wyatt's grim countenance, too, but she said : “ Now, no more nonsense. Try to cultivate a little dignity. Go finish the up-stairs rooms, and see if you can do it without imagining yourself an opera singer. It's Saturday, remember, and there is no time to dawdle. You can't work and play at the same time.”

Kathleen started out the door, but just then caught sight of the postman and, with the hope of a word from Miss Keene, asked : “ Shall I go out and get the mail first ? I see the postman has brought it.”

“ You may as well, but bring it right in. Don't stop to gossip with the Hovey girls.”

Kathleen waited for no further permission, but went

out to the box, finding to her joy a single letter addressed to herself. It was in unfamiliar handwriting. She did not dare stop to read it but thrust it into the front of her blouse and returned to the house. Tossing the remaining mail on the dining-room table with the announcement, "Here it is, Auntie," she made quick work of getting up-stairs to her room where she could examine the letter uninterrupted. She tore off the wrapping, glanced hastily at the signature, "Frances Keene," kissed it rapturously and then eagerly scanned the lines. The words were few, but to the point. They came to this: Miss Keene had a friend who had been the Guardian of a Camp-Fire. She was a teacher obliged to take a rest after an illness. She wanted a quiet place to board where she could have outdoor life and a few interests. She was not rich and could not pay high rates. She was not exacting, but must have a place clean and where the food might be simple if well cooked. Miss Keene thought here was a chance for the Brightwood girls. Would they talk it over and answer as soon as possible?

Kathleen could scarcely wait to see Ray, but knew there was small chance of it even after the work was done. But fortune favored her, for just as she was at the end of her tasks came a call from her aunt: "I want you, Kathleen. I've got to have some baking-

powder right away. Run down to the store and get it as quick as you can."

As good luck would have it Kathleen met Ray on her way back and could at least unburden herself of her news even if she could not stop to discuss it.

"Are you in such a hurry? Can't you come in for a few minutes and talk it over?" asked Ray.

"Oh, dear me, no, but I will come the very first chance I get. Here, take the letter and read it to your mother and the girls, so there will be no time wasted." She parted from her friend and reached home promptly enough to satisfy her aunt, but it did not seem as if the day's work would ever be done and she be allowed a few minutes to go over to the Hoveys'.

"Can't you let a day go by without the Hoveys?" asked her aunt shortly. "You see them at school all the week and at Sunday-school and church on Sundays. You'd much better be sitting down to your mending instead of going off visiting."

"I could take my mending over there," persisted Kathleen. "I could work much faster if I could sit with the girls."

"I declare you are persistent enough to provoke a saint. Be off with you. Don't forget to take your work and don't overstay your time."

So Kathleen was free to escape, and found the three

girls discussing the letter at a lively rate. "Have you thought of any place?" inquired Kathleen eagerly as she opened her bag and drew forth a pair of stockings to darn.

"Not yet," replied Ray. "It is pretty hard. The places that are really clean and attractive would probably not be open to a stranger, and those places that would take her we couldn't recommend."

"That is true. It doesn't seem as if it were going to be easy, does it?"

They all considered the matter in silence for a few minutes, then Kathleen spoke. "I suppose if I were to go into the attic we could give the room. We are clean, but we are rather skimpy as to food, although it is cooked well enough. Then a good deal more would fall on Aunt Susan, even if she were willing to undertake it. Really, girls, I believe it is up to you all."

"Why, we never once thought of that. Do let's call mother," exclaimed Margaret. "She was saying just the other day that our income this year was less than usual and she wished she knew of some way of adding to it, but we never thought of a possible boarder. We have a nice spare room, and I see no reason why we shouldn't be the ones to take Miss Bolton."

The upshot of the matter was that before the end of Kathleen's half hour it was all settled that Miss Bolton

should be offered the spare room, and a week later there was great excitement in the Hovey household. Mrs. Hovey in the kitchen many times lifted the cover from her pans of rolls to be sure of the exact moment when they should show the necessary lightness for putting them in the oven. Margaret, the eldest, and Grace, the second daughter, arranged and rearranged the parlor and dining-room, while up-stairs Ray, with Kathleen, put the final touches to the spare room.

Kathleen had obtained her aunt's consent to bring over an offering of daffodils. "I thought they would be so cheerful and sunshiny in the room," she said.

"Oh, Kathleen, I believe you have gathered your very last ones," said Ray, hunting around for a proper vase into which she could put the flowers.

"Well, suppose I have; it doesn't make any difference. Nobody over at our house cares anything about them, nobody but myself, and I would rather Miss Bolton should have them. They just come up of themselves every year and nobody even looks at them. There, on the bureau, I think, Ray; they look better there than on the table."

"I wish we had some new curtains," said Ray giving a twitch to the faded, though scrupulously clean, window draperies.

"Oh, they do very well," said Kathleen looking around at the red and green, carefully mended, carpet, the yellow cottage furniture with its decorations of flowers, and at the chromos on the wall. As her eyes fell upon the plump, neat bed she said: "It looks so comfortable and I know she will love this view of the mountains. It is a nice large room, and she can't help liking it."

"As soon as we hear the stage I am going to light the fire in the fireplace," Ray told her. "It isn't really needed, but it will be a sort of welcome and will remind her of the Camp-Fire Girls. It is most time, it seems to me."

"Suppose you watch from the window and I go to the gate," proposed Kathleen. "When I see the stage coming I will make a signal and you can start up the fire. There, I do believe I hear wheels."

She rushed to the door and had bare time to give a frantic wave of the hand when the dingy stage clattered up. The driver jumped down to open the door and out stepped a little woman with merry brown eyes and a sunny face. The driver, shouldering her trunk, followed her up the brick walk. Mrs. Hovey and the group of girls came to the edge of the porch.

"Well, well, here you all are," exclaimed Miss Bolton quite as if they were old friends from whom she had

been parted for a while. "This is Mrs. Hovey, of course, and let me see if I can pick out her three girls ; two of them I can perfectly. Now don't tell me which is which of the other two. One must be Kathleen Gilman. Why, certainly, how silly of me, Kathleen is the younger one." She held out her hand to each and would have none of their help when they tried to carry her hand-bag and umbrella.

So chattering in the friendliest way Miss Bolton followed the younger girls up-stairs to where the fire was crackling cheerily. Miss Bolton took a swift survey of the room, gave one hasty glance out the window and then her eyes sought the open fire. Whatever she may have thought of the red and green ingrain carpet and the inartistic furniture she gave no sign, but walked to the fireplace and spread out her hands to the blaze. She was silent for a moment and then flattening the fingers of the right hand against those of the left, the forefinger slightly raised, she said slowly and seriously :

" Burn, fire, burn !
Flicker, flicker, flame !
Whose hand above this blaze is lifted
Shall be with magic touch engifted,
To warm the hearts of lonely mortals
Who stand without their open portals.
The torch shall draw them to the fire
Higher, higher

By desire.

Whoso shall stand by this hearthstone,

Flame-fanned,

Shall never, never stand alone ;

Whose house is dark and bare and cold,

Whose house is cold,

This is his own.

Flicker, flicker, flicker, flame ;

Burn, fire, burn !”

Much impressed the girls listened attentively. Miss Bolton drew them close to her, one each side. “It was dear of you to think of the fire,” she said. “It is really our first Camp-Fire meeting, isn’t it? That is why I repeated our Fire Song. Oh, we are going to have a good time together, I feel sure of it. I have our Manual right there in my bag, and we can talk it all over this evening.”

“Can we really begin right away ?” asked Kathleen eagerly.

“Why not? I am a lawfully appointed Guardian of the Fire. When I became ill I had to give over my own Camp-Fire to my first Torch Bearer, but I still have my certificate of authorization, and it doesn’t have to be changed because of my change of residence. So you see there need be no delay.”

“Oh, that is almost too good to be true,” said Kathleen. “We were so afraid there might be a long wait.”

"How many want to join us? Have you spoken to any of your friends?"

"Oh, yes," Ray spoke up, "there are two or three others beside ourselves."

Miss Bolton nodded. "Well, my dear," she said, "we shall have to talk it over. How lovely those daffodils are with the last sunbeams striking them. Have you been noticing them?"

"No, I haven't," confessed Ray.

"Seek beauty is the first order of our Law. You have an abundance of it here, haven't you?"

"Oh, do you think so? We consider it such a very ugly little place," put in Kathleen.

Miss Bolton patted her hand affectionately. "With those glorious mountains, this fire and these golden cups of light one doesn't have to go far afield to find beautiful things. But, dear me, we can talk of that later; I must get ready for supper."

"And I must go, for Auntie will need me; it is about our supper time too."

"Then fly, my child, fly. 'Give service' is the second part of the Law. You're coming back this evening, aren't you? Our fire is all lighted and we can have our first real meeting right here in this nice big room."

CHAPTER IV

PRELIMINARIES

IF Miss Bolton had not been such a perfectly informal person the four girls who filed solemnly into her room would have felt rather awed by what they were about to undertake, but she put them at their ease at the outset by saying: "Now, girls, the Camp-Fire Girls was started to help girls to do the things they like best to do. While it is to be taken seriously, in a certain sense, it isn't meant to curtail your pleasures, but rather to enlarge them. While it designs to help you to your very best development, mentally, morally and physically, it doesn't intend to make you priggish, self-absorbed or clannish. The Law is this: 'Seek beauty,' everywhere, anywhere, in the outside world, in the lives of those around you, in the home. 'Give service'; if it is best given at home give it there; if the opportunity is not at home you will not lack in ways to help in other directions. 'Pursue knowledge'; if you are still schoolgirls give your energies to your school work; if you are not going to school, or even if you are, don't lose an opportunity of acquiring

knowledge. I never found a scrap of knowledge to come amiss. 'Be trustworthy'; don't slight things; don't give eye-service. Be loyal to your friends, your fellow women, to your best self. 'Hold on to health.' There are times when the most well-meaning person fails in her judgment and oversteps the bounds before she is aware of it, but we must use every means to restore health, and being restored we must keep well by using wisdom in our eating, sleeping, dressing and exercising."

Grace drew a long sigh. She loved good things to eat and was not any too fond of exercise.

Miss Bolton gave her a gay little nod. "We are not expecting any one to waste away through fasting, nor to wear herself out by over-exertion," she said smiling, "so don't any of you think you are to take vows which would be difficult to keep. 'Glorify work' is the next part of our Law. I haven't a doubt but most of you look upon work as a sordid, depressing, unnatural thing, but it is not. You remember what Mrs. Browning says:

" 'Get work, get work !

Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.' "

For my own part I believe that the busiest people are always the happiest. You can put joy into your work

just as you can into play ; indeed, happiness consists in our making the best use of our best powers. I firmly believe there are more people who can trace the cause of ill health and unhappiness to idleness than there are who trace it to work."

"Do you really mean to say that all work can be made pleasant?" inquired Kathleen earnestly.

"Perhaps all work may not be equally pleasant, but I do think the spirit which you put into even unpleasant things, and the manner in which they are performed have a lot to do with it. Nowadays there are so many helps in housework that one can get along much better than our grandmothers could do. We shall have to have a special session in order to discuss that subject. 'Be happy' comes last in our Law; we shall have to talk about that as occasion comes. Now, I would like each one of you to commit the Law to memory. If you write it down that will help you to remember. I brought along some pads and pencils."

"How often do we meet?" asked Ray.

"Once a week generally. Once a month we have a ceremonial meeting, a Council Fire, we call it. At that meeting new girls may be admitted to membership, others receive such honors and ranks as they may have won, and altogether it is more formal than the weekly meetings. The best and usual hour for a Coun-

cil Fire is when the sun is about to set. It is a very beautiful and solemn time when the Sunset Song is sung, the fire lighted and the twilight shadows gather. As yet, however, it is too cold for an outdoor meeting and we shall have to content ourselves inside. I do not see why this room would not make a good meeting place; we can see the sun drop behind the hills from those windows, and we can range ourselves in front of the fireplace and light our fire as the sun goes down."

"Lovely," murmured Kathleen with an ecstatic sigh.

"It is not always possible, even in summer, to have a Council Fire at the hour of sunset," Miss Bolton went on, "but it is the ideal time and we must try to arrange for it whenever we can. At a summer camp it is easy enough, for there the conditions are the most favorable. I suppose you all know of some pleasant, quiet spot near the village where we can have our outdoor Council Fires."

"Oh, the mountain, the mountain is where we must go for them," declared Kathleen enthusiastically. "We can find perfectly lovely spots over there."

"Have you an Indian name, Miss Bolton, and may we know what it is?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, yes, I have one; it is Sebowisha, and is an Indian name for brook. I chose it because the little

brooks are useful in a small way; each one helps to feed a river, and so does its part in the world's great plan, so I hope, by aiding with my small streams of knowledge, to do my part."

"I think that is fine," said Ray, "and I shall try very hard to choose a name which really means something."

"I'd like to know something about the ranks and the honors and those things," spoke up Margaret.

"These are the ranks," Miss Bolton told her: "First, Wood Gatherer; second, Fire Maker; third, Torch Bearer. For the first, which is what we shall be concerned with in the beginning, there are six things required: you must be a member of a Camp-Fire for at least three months, attend six meetings and two Council Fires, select a name and a symbol."

"Oh, I shall adore to do that," cried Kathleen.

"Most girls do," Miss Bolton smiled. "The fourth requirement is to make a head-band, the fifth to have a ceremonial dress, the sixth to win at least ten honors. You will find the list of honors in the Manual."

"Oh, dear me, I am in such a hurry to begin," cried Kathleen excitedly. "How can I get hold of a Manual?"

"I brought two copies with me," Miss Bolton told her. "I can lend you one until you get your own."

"Is there any expense attached?" inquired Margaret a little hesitatingly.

"Not very much, certainly not more than we can manage to meet easily. It is really much more to the purpose when a girl earns enough to defray her individual expenses. There are many ways in which she can do this. I haven't a doubt but each one of you could suggest some way. What are you most expert in doing?"

"Margaret embroiders beautifully," Grace spoke up.

"Good, then she should have no trouble."

"Grace can make dandy candy," put in Ray.

"Dandy candy is likewise good," laughed Miss Bolton, "although one of the requirements when a girl is trying for the rank of Fire Maker is that she refrains from candy for one month."

"She can do the refraining and we will do the eating that month," remarked Kathleen.

"What can you do, Kathleen?" asked Miss Bolton.

"Oh, dear me, I don't know. I generally only help to do things. Auntie will never let me try anything for myself: she is so afraid I will spoil it. I did make some jam once and it was right good, wasn't it, Ray?"

"It was fine. I never ate anything more delicious, Miss Bolton, than that little jar of wild strawberry jam that Kath gave me at Christmas."

"If that is the case," returned Miss Bolton, "I don't think you need look further, Kathleen. We can count on jellies and preserves as a mighty good asset for you. What about Ray?"

"I know what I should adore, but I am not so sure about the success. I would love to raise flowers to sell."

"Excellent," cried Miss Bolton. "Why, girls, you couldn't have chosen better. Such a showing of talent at the very outset is most encouraging. All those things will come in for honors, too, by the way. You can win honors for Health Craft, House Craft, Camp Craft, Hand Craft, Business and Patriotism. Then there is a special award for what is known as National Honors. You will find it all in the little book."

"Sadie Wallace showed me her ring and her bracelet," said Ray. "Won't you tell us something about the symbols, Miss Bolton?"

"Oh, yes, and about the ceremonial dress. I did think it was so picturesque when I saw it on Judy Falkner," Kathleen spoke.

"I shall be glad to show you my pin, the ring, bracelet, the Torch Bearer's pin and the ceremonial dress. This little pin which I wear is the Guardian's pin. It shows the symbol for fire which is our general symbol. As soon as you become Wood Gatherers you

may embroider a symbol upon your right sleeve, seven fagots bound together to represent the seven points of the Law. When you become Fire Makers you have a right to add a flame of orange and red, and to the flame you can put a touch of white when you reach the rank of Torch Bearer."

"It is all so precious; I do love it so," exclaimed Kathleen, who was nothing if not enthusiastic.

"I simply love the bracelet," said Ray, "and I am going to do my level best to win it. I don't mean just because it is a bracelet, please don't think that, Miss Bolton, but I should be so proud to think I could do all the things necessary for a Fire Maker."

"That is better, but best of all is wanting to do the good things because they are good and beautiful. You should all have your ceremonial dress before our first Council Fire; it is worn only upon the occasion of a ceremonial Council. I think if we are to have added members for these first meetings that they will want to be informed pretty soon. We must not have too large a number, about twelve is usually the most satisfactory. Who are the ones you had in mind, Ray?"

"I talked to Linda Knowles and Frances Sadler the other day," Ray answered. "They were tremendously interested, and said they would like very much to join.

They had read something about the Camp-Fire Girls, they said."

"Send them to me as soon as you can. They would make our number six, which would be about right to begin with."

"I'd like to know how long it takes to win the different ranks," said Margaret.

"It depends upon the girl. A really earnest girl, not too young, who has time to give to the work, may not be more than a few months in winning each rank, but this is not usual. A year is considered a short time to allow for each promotion. To be a Torch Bearer one should not be too young, for she becomes a leader, then an assistant to the Guardian, and may become a Guardian herself if she has the proper qualifications. If she has shown herself to be a really efficient Fire Maker she could attain the highest rank six months later, but two years is often scarce enough time."

"I can work very hard," said Margaret, "for you see I don't go to school as the others do, and I can promise you that I will give my whole heart to doing my very best."

"And I will help you all I can," Miss Bolton promised heartily. "We may call this our preliminary meeting, and we will have a real one a week from now, if you say so. In the meantime we can talk it over

with your two friends and any others whom you may choose. You can look over the Manual, and if each wants one of her own I can send for copies. The price is twenty-five cents each. You are all perfectly welcome to use mine if you would rather wait, but it is rather more convenient to have one at hand, for you will want to refer to the book very often, I can assure you."

"I think I would like one of my very own, if you will be good enough to send for it, Miss Bolton," said Margaret.

"I think I will have to ask mother first," said Grace; "she may think one in the family is enough."

"I don't think it is," declared Ray, "and as soon as I have five cents more I shall send for one; I have twenty cents toward it."

"If you will let me have one of yours for a while, I shall be very thankful," Kathleen spoke timidly. Twenty-five cents did not grow on every bush for her.

Miss Bolton did not hesitate to put the book into her hands. "Take it right along this very night," she urged, "and if there is anything you want to know come right over and ask me. Remember that a Guardian can be appealed to at any time. She wants to keep up a high standard for her girls and her desire is to aid them and to be a true, helpful friend."

"That is just what I have always longed for," sighed Kathleen.

There was a little more talk, and then Kathleen traveled home as fast as her weak knee would permit. Her brain was teeming with new thoughts and new ambitions. She was not used to very much encouragement, in the undertaking of new enterprises, from members of her own household, and did not expect it.

Therefore to none of the family had she confided her new interest in the Camp-Fire Girls, and as they did not know of Miss Bolton except as "the Hoveys' boarder," Kathleen had wisely decided that she would not talk upon a subject with which she was not familiar, and had waited till she should be well informed before she should tell her aunt what was now her dearest interest.

So she said a hasty good-night and went up to her room, the precious book under her coat. Long after all the rest were in bed she sat up and pored over it.

CHAPTER V

NEW NAMES

IT was when she was wiping the dishes that Kathleen told her aunt about the Camp-Fire Girls. "Humph!" said Mrs. Wyatt, "I suppose you will be running over to the Hoveys' more than ever if you take up with that notion."

"I don't go out so very much, do I, Auntie? I know I stayed rather late last evening, but that was an unusual occasion. There was so much to talk about."

"Well, if it is going to be that way I don't know about your going into this thing—what do you call it? Camp-Fire?"

"The Camp-Fire Girls. Oh, but Auntie, you don't know how much it will teach me, and how much more useful I shall be. Why, we get honors for all sorts of household work, cooking, sewing and all that. I wish you could talk to Miss Bolton about it."

"She's the one who has set it going, is she? Well, I suppose it will be only polite for me to go over and call on her as she is a stranger, but don't set your heart

on joining this club, or whatever it is. Your uncle is dead set against clubs for females."

Kathleen sighed. "They don't call it a club and I am sure it is for good and not for harm. If only you would talk to Miss Bolton you would understand."

"Oh, I'll talk to her some of these days."

"But we do so want to begin right away."

"Now, isn't that just like you, Kathleen; always in a hurry and never willing to inquire into things properly."

"All three of the Hovey girls are going to join," remarked Kathleen designing to give a further argument.

"That's neither here nor there; you don't have to do everything they do. I suppose it will cost something, too; if it does you may be sure your uncle will put his foot down. He is not one to lay out money for anything but necessities."

"It will cost very little, and Miss Bolton said she would rather we would earn the money ourselves for the expenses."

"I'd like to see you earning any money; you have never done it yet."

"That isn't any reason why I shouldn't after I am shown how," Kathleen spoke with some spirit. Why must her aunt always meet her plans with so many objections?

"Well, we shall see what we shall see," replied Mrs. Wyatt oracularly, and Kathleen, feeling rather disheartened, put away the last dish and made her escape. All the enthusiasm of the previous evening fell away from her as, discouraged and depressed, she decided she could not fight determined opposition. She had one of her silent moods for the rest of the day, a mood which brought teasing remarks from Jimmy and disapproving glances from her uncle.

But when she came home the next day there was a little smile on her face lingering after a talk with Ray, and the smile broadened into an expression of delight as she beheld Miss Bolton in close conversation with her aunt.

"I came to tell you," said the visitor, "that I have found such a good name for our Camp."

"Our Camp." Then it must be that she had talked of it to Mrs. Wyatt and maybe it was settled that she should be allowed to become a member. Kathleen's spirits rose.

"I have been telling your aunt all about it," Miss Bolton went on as if reading Kathleen's thoughts, "and she quite agrees with me that it is a good movement. Don't you, Mrs. Wyatt?"

But Kathleen was not surprised when her aunt answered warily: "So far as I know I can't see much

objection to it, but I shall have to talk it over with my husband before I can give my final consent to Kathleen's joining. He doesn't much approve of these modern ideas about girls, but maybe he will agree; I don't know." And with this half-hearted sort of promise the girl was obliged to be content.

"The name, you promised to tell me what you had found," said Kathleen at the first pause in the conversation.

"So I did; that is really what I came over for," Miss Bolton told her. "It happened this way: This morning I had a call from Miss Keene's friends, the Furnivals, at Weston. They came over in their motor car to take me to drive. Well, we were talking about the Camp-Fire Girls and Mrs. Furnival asked me what we meant to name our Camp-Fire. I told her we were in no great hurry as the girls would have to be on probation for a while till some of them should have earned their first rank, and that a suitable name was rather difficult to find, for we wanted something appropriate, something not too long and that sounded musical. Then she proposed that we go and look through Mr. Furnival's library.

"I have always liked the name of Brightwood ever since I heard it, for it exactly expresses the Camp-Fire. Bright wood, the bright, flaming, burning wood,

the flame which is our symbol and which represents the fire in the home around which we gather ; it stands for the simple outdoor life, too. You know in our hand sign of fire we imitate the curve of a supposed flame. So you see why Brightwood appealed to me and seemed a name made to order, for I suddenly conceived the idea of finding its equivalent in some Indian dialect. But, after searching and searching through many books on Indian customs and western travel, I was in despair and almost decided to give it up, for some words were so long as to be out of the question, others were not pleasant to hear, but at last I did discover that by combining two words from the list of those used by the Oto Indians I could translate Brightwood into an acceptable name."

"I don't believe I ever heard of the Oto Indians."

"They are allied to the Sioux or Dakota Indians, and speak a dialect of their language. I found that in their tongue Ohuanuáh means clear or bright, and Nah means wood. By combining the two we get Ohuanuáh-Nah. The first word is divided into three syllables, O-huan-uáh with the accent on the last. Of course the Nah which follows is easy enough to pronounce. Do you like it, Kathleen? Don't you think it soft and pretty?"

"I think it is lovely and so suitable. To think this

little village, which I have always rather despised, should have suggested all these lovely things to you, and that its name should really be the most wonderful one, for if you had gone forth and searched the country over you couldn't have found a better name for our Camp-Fire."

"So it seems to me. Brightwood became more appropriate as I came home through those wonderful mountain woods, so glorious in the spring sunshine, so full of light and color. As we looked down into the valley I could imagine how it must have appeared to the Indians of long ago. Probably where this little village now stands it was all woods, a bright wood surely in the autumn when the leaves had turned, and a bright wood with the sun shining on the young spring leaves, and so as we shall have our Council Fire in those same bright woods I thought no name could suit us better than those soft-sounding words: Ohuanuáh-Nah."

"I am glad you told me what you were thinking as you went through the mountain woods, and how you applied the name to them, for now it is associated with the mountain as well as the village in the valley. It is wonderful how you thought it all out. It makes things so much more precious when you know their hidden meaning. Do the other girls like the name?"

"Immensely. I made a list of some other words, too, and besides have the books over in my room. Mrs. Furnival insisted upon lending them to me. Margaret and Ray have each chosen a name; Grace has not decided yet."

"Oh, do tell us theirs," said Kathleen with added interest.

"Margaret has chosen Huhpátka which, in a Mandan village dialect, means an ear of corn. She will tell us why she has chosen it. She will use it as her symbol. Ray has taken the word Ahmo meaning bee. She found it in Hiawatha and you can easily guess why she chose it. She will use a bee for her symbol, she says."

"Oh, dear, I am just wild to choose mine. If only I knew positively that I would have the right to, that I could really be a Camp-Fire Girl." She looked wistfully at her aunt who said :

"Well, so far as I am concerned you may, but it rests with your uncle."

This was so much better than at first promised that Kathleen felt more hopeful as she turned to Miss Bolton to say : "Oh, do come over soon to talk to Uncle James. Couldn't you come this evening ?"

Miss Bolton laughed but Mrs. Wyatt frowned. "Now if that isn't just like Kathleen ; she can never wait, but must needs have things done all in a minute."

"There is no reason why I should not come to see Mr. Wyatt this evening if he is at liberty," said Miss Bolton with sympathy for youthful impatience.

"Oh, I shall be pleased to see you," replied Mrs. Wyatt perfunctorily, but Miss Bolton could see that she considered her rather forward. However if she gained her point the rest did not matter, and she took her leave feeling that she had accomplished as much as she could hope for.

As for Kathleen, she was so excited that she could not eat her supper. Later she crept down the back stairs, thinking she would wait to see if Miss Bolton were really coming over. There was not the slightest use in trying to study the next day's lessons, for she could not put her mind on them until she knew the result of the interview with her uncle.

However, hardly had she gained the path leading to the front gate when she heard a step behind her and saw her uncle approaching. He was going out and Kathleen's heart sank. How could she wait another day?

"What are you doing out here?" asked Mr. Wyatt sharply. "Are you waiting for anybody?" He looked at the girl suspiciously.

"I—I—thought maybe some one from the Hoveys' might be coming over," faltered Kathleen.

"Well, I guess they won't have any difficulty in finding you; they never seem to have. You'd better go in the house and stay there."

"But it is so lovely out in the fresh air," protested Kathleen.

"Night air isn't good for anybody," returned her uncle. "I am not going to pay any doctor's bills on account of such a foolish notion as your hanging around out-of-doors after nightfall. Go on in."

There was nothing for Kathleen to do but obey. No hope for her that night. Not only was she haled back to the house, but if Miss Bolton called she would fail to see Mr. Wyatt. So, slowly Kathleen returned, but she could not settle down to her books, and instead she crept up to the attic, opened the window looking out upon the street and watched for Miss Bolton. Presently she heard the gate click. Joy! her uncle was coming back; he had gone no further than the store, so Miss Bolton would not miss seeing him. No affair in the universe was quite so important to the girl as this interview. She was one who threw her whole soul into anything which interested her and just now it seemed as if she must die if her great desire were denied her. Suppose Miss Bolton should not come after all, and, if she did come, suppose her uncle should refuse flatly to allow himself to be persuaded. "I just

couldn't stand it, no I could not," Kathleen whispered passionately.

She was not to be disappointed in Miss Bolton, however, for in a few minutes she saw her coming. "I will not go down," Kathleen said to herself, "for if I am there uncle will be sure to say no, just to show his authority."

She went back to her room and tried to study, but it was no use, so finally she decided that if she were to go down and wait on the porch it could not be called disobedience as she would be under cover; and there she was when Miss Bolton came out. It was a quiet, dreamy windless night, calm stars above, the waiting earth beneath. The utter peace of it all silenced the riot in Kathleen's heart and when at last Miss Bolton came out she stole forward to meet her with no appearance of impatience.

"So you have been waiting for me, have you?" said the caller, linking her arm in Kathleen's. "It is such a beautiful night suppose we walk up and down the porch a little. Your uncle is not quite ready to accept a new idea, but I have hopes, my dear. From what I have seen of him I judge that it takes some time for seed to grow in his mind, but you must not be discouraged, and while we are waiting for his decision I shall consider you one of us, for he has not said positively that you shall not be."

Kathleen gave a sigh. "It is very hard to be patient when you want to do anything so awfully much," she said.

"I know it, but we must take a lesson from the waiting earth, waiting for the touch of spring after the long winter, and now the spring is coming. It is night, but the dawn will arrive no matter how long the night may seem. Now, let us talk of something very nice and cheerful. Have you chosen your name yet?"

"Oh, do you think I may?"

"Why not? You may as well be ready. Now, I think you'd better go in for you may tire that weak knee. Good-night. Don't forget the dawn is near."

They parted and Kathleen went up-stairs saying over and over: "I must be patient, I must be patient," and went to sleep pondering over a suitable name for a Camp-Fire Girl.

She awoke very early, just as the gray of morning was creeping into her room. She lay quite still for a few minutes, and then her thoughts traveled back to the subject which was last upon her mind the night before. She arose, went to the window and sat with elbows upon the sill, looking off toward the mountains looming up sombrely. The sun had not yet reached them, but presently a rosy beam found them out and then another, until the whole mountain top was bathed

in a soft hue of warm amethyst color. Then a golden glory touched the young leaves of near-by trees, and sought out one remaining daffodil which turned a sunny laughing face toward the girl at the window above. She sat, filled with a new sense of the world's beauty, and smiling at her thoughts. Presently she arose and clasped her hands over her heart.

"I know," she exclaimed, "Dawn of Day ; it shall be Dawn of Day, and I will take a daffodil for my symbol."

She went over to where she had been sitting the night before, and from out a pile of papers selected a sheet which she took to the window to examine. Casting her eye quickly down a column she found the word she wanted. "Here it is," she murmured, "and I like it, I like it very much. Dear rising sun, the symbol of fire, the symbol of the Camp-Fire Girls, here is *Thurénsera* ! Mountains, you have known me as Kathleen Gilman, but to the Camp-Fire Girls I shall be known as *Thurénsera*, Dawn of Day."

CHAPTER VI

TILDA HESITATES

“OH, come on, Kath ; don’t be such an old granny.” It was Tilda Eckert who was trying to beguile Kathleen into taking a wild walk with her. The Eckerts lived across the street in the white house with green blinds, next to the Hoveys. “Come on,” begged Tilda.

“I ought to stay at home and darn my stockings ; I always do it on Saturday,” returned Kathleen, yet as one who might be persuaded.

“Pooh ! what a thing to stay at home for. Haven’t you any but holey ones ?”

“I don’t know. I haven’t looked them over.”

“Well, if you haven’t any without holes you can do as a man I heard of, wear two pairs. He said the holes in the two never came in quite the same place.”

Kathleen laughed. “I don’t think I’ll follow his example, but I might hunt out the pair that needed the least mending and do those if I had to. Do you want to start instanter, Tilda ?”

"On the dot."

"Where are we going?" asked Kathleen as they started out.

"To a dandy place if we can find it. We have to look for a certain spring and beyond that a cunning pool, almost as big as a pond. Sig and the boys found it last Saturday, but they want to keep it a secret from the Camp-Fire Girls. Boys are so silly about wanting things to themselves. You would suppose that they had bought the mountain to hear them talk, and I want to spring a surprise on them. Are you game? It is a sort of adventure."

At the word adventure Kathleen was all alert. There was not much of adventure to be had in Brightwood. "Where you lead I follow," she answered. "How did you happen to find out about the place if the boys are so secret about it?"

"I picked up a little from this one and a little from that, so by patching it all together I managed to get a pretty correct idea of where the place is. You turn off the road, or path, this side the one we take to go to the old ruined chimney."

"I don't believe I know the place."

"Neither do I and that is why I want to find out. I thought I knew our woods pretty well, but it seems I don't."

The first part of their way was an easy climb, then for a short distance it became steeper, and presently they came to an uneven path leading into the woods. "This must be it," said Tilda pausing. "I am sure the next turn takes us to the chimney road. Let's try this."

Kathleen agreed and they traveled on until they saw a zigzag fence barring their way. "Do you suppose this can be right?" asked Kathleen.

"I didn't hear them say anything about a fence," confessed Tilda, "but there is no reason why it shouldn't be right. Nobody thinks anything of climbing a fence, especially a boy. We may as well try it."

Over the fence they clambered, finding themselves in a scrubby sort of field. On one side the woods arose dense and impenetrable. In another direction was a second field where a herd of cows grazed peacefully.

"We won't try that side," decided Tilda. "Let's go around this way and see what there is."

They skirted the field, climbed another fence and discovered below them a ravine where wild flowers grew and where ferns were uncurling pale green fronds. Tilda stood gazing down. "I don't see any path," she said, "but I believe we have struck the place. It seems to me just the spot for a spring. Here goes, I'm going to try it."

She started down the steep, leaf-strewn bank. Kathleen, more cautious because of her knee, hesitated to follow, and stood watching Tilda's progress. As she gained impetus Tilda went faster and faster, snatching at branches, twigs, weeds as she went. Presently her feet flew from under her, down she sat sliding rapidly down the incline until she came to a halt at the very foot. She was perfectly still for a moment, then waved gaily to Kathleen who was carefully picking her way a little further along, and taking a zigzag route as being safer.

Tilda made no effort to rise until Kathleen reached her side and then she looked up saying calmly: "I've found it, but I was in rather too great haste, and I didn't expect to go tobogganing in April."

"Oh, Tilda," exclaimed Kathleen weak with laughter, "you did look so funny."

"I must look funny still," returned Tilda, regarding her feet ruefully. "I don't dare to get up and look at my clothes and I came down kerplunk with my feet in a puddle of water. That treacherous old bank was all slimy mud under the leaves and once I got started I couldn't stop."

"How long do you intend to sit there?" inquired Kathleen.

"Until I take off my shoes and stockings and hang

them up to dry; they are soaked," replied Tilda beginning to unfasten her shoes.

"They'll never dry and you'll catch your death o' cold."

"No, I won't. I want to paddle in the pond when we find it. I'll put my shoes and stockings over there on that rock in the sun. If only we had brought some matches we could make a fire and dry them sooner. Let's go further along out of the shade. See, it looks quite sunny beyond there. Is my skirt very muddy in the back, Kathleen?"

"I should think so. We'll scrape off what we can, then you'd better take it off and you can spread it out in the sun. When it is dry the rest of the mud will rub off more easily."

They walked toward the sunny spot ahead of them. Presently Tilda drew her attention from this. "Do look," she exclaimed; "there is the pond, as I live."

"So it is," decided Kathleen, "so we are right after all, and how pretty it is. I don't wonder the boys liked it. I suppose the reason we never discovered it is because it is probably private property and belongs to the man that owns that field we came through. It's nice and sunny here, Tilda. You can dry your skirt by spreading it out on those bushes."

Tilda divested herself of her skirt, her shoes and her stockings, and announced that she meant to paddle in the water. "My shoes aren't wet inside," she said, "but I will dry the outsides. The water is really quite warm and it is such fun to paddle. I don't know when I have had a chance to do it. You'd better come try it."

Holding her skirts high Tilda ventured into the water.

From her seat on a stone Kathleen once in a while looked in Tilda's direction. Presently she heard a crashing in the bushes behind her, and at the same moment with a startled cry Tilda rushed toward her and sank down by her side. Then suddenly they were surrounded by cows who came clumsily clattering down the hillside to reach the pond. They appeared as surprised at the sight of these invaders into their quiet region as the girls were at sight of them. Some of them stood stock still with uplifted heads, others gave a gentle "Moo" and went on, while the rest paid no attention at all, their main object being to get to the pond and take a drink.

"What shall we do?" whispered Kathleen almost paralyzed with fright.

"I think the best thing is to keep perfectly still," Tilda whispered back.

"Suppose one of them should take a notion to horn

us, do you think we would be safe if we were to rush out into the pond?"

"We don't know just how deep it may be and we might drown," returned Tilda, keeping her eye on the cows.

Just at this point one of the herd discovered the skirt and shoes laid out to dry. Evidently she was not pleased with the articles, for she lowered her head and shook it at the shoes, then lifting one upon a horn she gave it an indignant toss and proceeded on her way.

By this time most of the cows were in the pond, either taking long satisfying draughts or standing still, switching their tails. One by one finally passed on, gained the opposite border of the pond and began grazing peacefully along its brink.

"I say we make tracks for home," said Tilda as soon as the last cow had scrambled up the bank. "I thought we were lost when I saw my shoe tossed sky high. Weren't you scared, Kathleen?"

"I was nearly paralyzed at first, for I didn't know what had broken loose. I am not exactly afraid of cows, either."

Tilda gathered up her shoes and stockings, put them on, and in a few minutes they were again on their way, finding a spot where the bank was lower and where they could scramble up with less effort.

"I took a little longer at it," remarked Tilda when they had reached the top, "but somehow I prefer my method of going up better than I do the one I used in going down. Did you ever see such a spectacle as I am? My name is Mud, sure enough. I can't see, in reviewing the afternoon's entertainment, that we gained very much except that I had a good time splashing in the water," she said when they were well on their way.

"Oh, Tilda, when you like outdoor sports so much I don't see why you don't join the Camp-Fire Girls."

"Well, I will wait and see how you all come out. If you don't get sick and tired of it, maybe I will come in later." She broke off suddenly. "Oh, Kathleen, here come the boys. Not a word of where we have been. I'll bet you anything they are going to the pond. I don't want them to know yet that we have discovered it. My skirt looks perfectly dreadful. How can I manage to cover it up?"

"Take off your sweater and tie it around your waist," suggested Kathleen; "that will cover up the worst of it."

Tilda obeyed the hint and they went calmly forward to meet the three boys who were approaching.

"Where have you been?" asked Sig who was one of the number. He looked at the two girls suspiciously.

"Oh, just up the mountain a little way," returned Tilda carelessly. "Where are you going, may I ask?"

Sig looked at his companions. Billy Bodine laughed. "Oh, we, too, are just going up the mountain a little way. Are you on your way home?"

"Yes, for we have had quite a walk. I hope you will find as nice a place as we did. We are going to have a picnic there some day."

"Boys invited?" inquired Billy.

"Oh, no, it will be strictly for girls. We don't go paddling when boys are around. Good-bye; we must be getting on."

The three lads stood still and looked at one another as the girls followed the downward path. "Do you suppose they have found out?" asked Walter Northrup in a hollow whisper.

"'Course they haven't," returned Billy. "You won't catch girls going where cows are."

"Or mice," Sig put in.

"Or snakes," added Walter and then they all laughed, feeling that they had been able to get the best of the girls whether they knew it or not. The girls, be it said, were chuckling quite as much to themselves on the walk home and were making plans to disconcert the boys at some future day.

"It would be such fun to have a picnic when they

would arrive upon the scene and find us in possession of their secret haunt," said Tilda.

"In spite of the cows?"

"Oh, we could find a way to manage that. We could put up the bars; or we could get the owner to keep the cows in another field, or something like that. I can tell you what would be the very finest scheme: we would go ask permission, and then if the boys should come upon us we could be very superior and say they had no right there but we had. It would be such a joke on them."

"It would be a better joke if the Camp-Fire Girls were the ones to do it, but then you wouldn't be one of the party, and I am not sure whether I could be myself," Kathleen heaved a sigh.

"It's the strongest argument yet that you have offered for my joining," confessed Tilda. "I shouldn't care so much if the boys hadn't made such a point of it, but when they do that way I do so love to pay them back."

"How will you find out about the owner?" asked Kathleen.

"Love will find a way," laughed Tilda. And so, plotting and joking, they came into Brightwood.

CHAPTER VII

FIRST HONORS

KATHLEEN was busy in poring over a magazine devoted to affairs of the household in order to find some way in which she could earn a little money. She had thought a great deal about it during the past week, for since that never-to-be-forgotten morning when she decided upon her Camp-Fire name it had been all settled that she could join her friends in their new enterprise. Her uncle happened to hear that the Furnivals favored the plan and were doing all they could to further it, and as Mr. Wyatt had great respect for money and for Mr. Furnival as representing wealth and success, he was ready to fall into line.

It was early afternoon, the dishes were out of the way and Kathleen had run over to consult Ray. "You see," she said, "I want my own Manual. I feel sort of ashamed to borrow Miss Bolton's and keep it so long."

"I am sure you needn't mind," returned Ray. "She understands just how it is. If I weren't raking and

scraping together every penny to invest in flower seeds and plants, I would lend you the money, and you could pay me back when you could."

"Um-uh. No, sir, I don't want to do that. If you can earn money I can."

Kathleen returned to her magazine with new zest and began turning over the pages, stopping once in a while to read a recipe.

"I don't believe I can find anything here, Ray ; it seems to be a mushroom number, and it is not the time of year for mushrooms."

"That gives me an idea, though ; I might raise mushrooms and I believe I will try it. Just put the book aside, Kath, and I will look at it. Here is something that may give you some hints." She handed over another journal to her friend.

Kathleen took the paper and looked down the column which Ray pointed out. Presently she began to read attentively, then she flung down the paper and hurried out, calling as she went : "Don't put the paper away. I will be back in a minute."

She ran out of the house, across the street and hurried to the back yard of her own home, searching along the edge of the fence till she came upon a clump of green leaves, then she stooped down, gathered a single leaf, rubbed it between her fingers, smelled it and finally

put it in her mouth. Then she gathered another leaf and ran back to rejoin Ray. "I have it," she cried exultantly.

"You have? Tell me about it, Kath. I wondered why you rushed out in that wild way." Ray, as usual, was responsive.

"I saw a recipe for mint jelly in that paper and I suddenly remembered that there used to be some mint growing by our back fence. I didn't know but it would be too early for it, and I was afraid it might not have come up this year, so I couldn't wait a minute till I found out. It is there, plenty of it. See, here is a sample." She held out the leaf which Ray took.

"How good and fresh it smells," said Ray putting the leaf to her nose.

"Now let me see that recipe again," said Kathleen picking up the paper. "I have just ten cents; that will buy the gelatine, and the question is where to get the sugar. I shall not need another blessed thing."

"Except glasses," put in Ray, more practical.

"Oh, to be sure, glasses, I had forgotten them. Well, I shall have to beg, borrow or steal one or two. Oh, I have one of my very own. Mrs. Knowles sent me some jelly when I sprained my knee and said I needn't return the glass, as she had plenty, so I shall need only a couple more, for I must go slow at first."

"Why, I should think your aunt could let you have them and the sugar, too."

"I don't want to ask her. I want this to be my own unaided effort. Can't you see why I do?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so," replied Ray, although she did not see exactly, having a generous mother of her own to whom a couple of jelly glasses would be as nothing. "I am sure mother will gladly lend you the glasses and the sugar, too," she said, "and you can come over here and make the jelly."

"Oh, could I? That would be just fine, Ray. I would so much rather do it anywhere than in our own kitchen. In the first place Auntie could not help interfering. She wouldn't understand that I wanted to do it all by myself. She would think the main thing was to have it turn out a success."

"I see," replied Ray, quite convinced. "Well, you can have the kitchen quite to yourself to-morrow morning, if you like, and I will promise that no one will interfere with you for one hour at least. Between ten and eleven will be the best time. It shouldn't take more time than that for the actual making, although it will need to stand some time before it thickens."

"I am so excited," said Kathleen. "Ray, you are a darling child to help me out so beautifully, but then it

is just like you. Now, let me see — How much do you suppose jelly glasses are, Ray ? ”

“ Oh, I don’t know ; not more than thirty or thirty-five cents a dozen I should think.”

“ Well, say they are fifty cents, that would be ten cents for two, and then a pound of sugar will be — ”

“ It won’t take a pound for just three glasses, not more than half a pound.”

“ Then we will say five cents for sugar, to give a margin. Now then, ten for glasses, ten for gelatine, five for sugar, just twenty-five. How much do you suppose I can get for it, Ray ? ”

“ I should say fifteen or twenty cents, if it is good.”

“ Awful thought ! Oh, Ray, suppose it shouldn’t be good, what could I do ? ” Kathleen threw herself down on the lounge in an agony of apprehension.

“ You’d just have to try it over again,” said Ray calmly. “ If you follow the directions exactly there is no reason why it should not be good. Of course if the weather should be warm it will take longer to harden. It is often made of apples, that is most people make apple jelly and put in the mint with it, so it will be sure to keep.”

“ But this recipe isn’t for that kind, and besides I haven’t any apples,” said Kathleen in a crestfallen way. “ Do you think I’d better not attempt it, Ray ? ”

"Oh, my, no. I was only telling you the difficulties."

"Suppose it should be warm and should get all soupy and runny, I could not possibly sell it; as it is I don't know who will buy it." Kathleen was as far down in the depths as she had been high on the heights.

"Don't be a goosey goose, but go right along, make your jelly and trust to luck. That is the only way. Do you suppose I am counting on a frost to kill my flowers or a swarm of grasshoppers to come and eat them up? I mean to go ahead and do my best, and then if I fail I will start over again. I don't see either, while you are about it, why you don't make half a dozen glasses. You will have gelatine enough to make a quart. Wait a minute and I will ask mother how much glasses are."

She left the room, coming back in a few minutes with the information that the glasses were thirty cents a dozen. "You have plenty of mint and sugar is cheap, so why not make all you can at one go?"

"But suppose I cannot sell so many," Kathleen demurred.

"If you can sell three you can sell six," decided Ray.

"Then I believe I will go and get the gelatine now

so as to have everything ready. I will gather the mint first thing in the morning."

"And I will have the glasses and all the rest all ready for you when you come over."

Fortunately the next day was a cool one and so was favorable for the jelly making. With what anxiety Kathleen began her task no one guessed. The entire Hovey household was deeply interested, but all respected her desire to be left alone.

"If there is anything you want to know don't hesitate to ask," said Ray putting her head in at the door the last thing. "And, O Kath, mother says be sure to set the glasses in hot water while you are filling them."

"I hope in my excitement that I won't forget to do it," returned Kathleen fervently.

For an hour there were spirited movements heard in the kitchen. Just before the time was up, Ray, unable to stand it any longer, peeped in. "How are you getting along?" she asked.

"It is done, all done," declared Kathleen, proudly pointing to the six glasses set upon a tray on the table. "Now I am washing up the dishes. Isn't it a lovely color? such a clear green."

"Have you tasted it?" inquired Ray.

"Oh, no, I didn't dare to, but it looks lovely. Now

if it will only get stiff enough, I shall be so happy. I don't suppose I can tell before to-night, can I?"

"Maybe not then," Mrs. Hovey told her. "Unless you put it on ice it seldom turns to jelly in less than twenty-four hours, so you must not be discouraged if it is still a liquid this evening."

"And may I leave it here till it is ready?"

"Most certainly. It will not be in the way in the least. We will take good care of it." And so Kathleen went off to attend to home duties, but she went hopefully.

Sunday morning she could not refrain from stopping before church to inquire about the welfare of the jelly.

Ray met her at the door. "It has jelled," she exclaimed. "I was dying to taste it but I didn't. Come in and have a peep and we'll walk to church together."

The next day came the fruition of Kathleen's hopes, for after the girls had started to school up came Mrs. Furnival's automobile with the lady herself inside. "I thought maybe you would like to go to the city with me," she said to Miss Bolton. "I am starting early so as to do some errands, and get back before very late. Will you go along?"

"Indeed I will," Miss Bolton consented and presently came out ready to go. "I wonder if you would have

room for this," she showed a basket which she carried carefully.

"Plenty of room," Mrs. Furnival assured her.

"It is Kathleen's jelly," Miss Bolton explained. "I thought I could easily dispose of it for her and it would give the dear child such joy if I could come back and tell her it was sold. You know it is her very first attempt at making money and it means so much to her. She had ten cents only, but she borrowed the glasses and the sugar, found the mint in her own yard and here is the result." She lifted the paper covering of the basket and displayed the six glasses of clear green jelly.

"Lovely," exclaimed Mrs. Furnival. "I will gladly take two glasses. They will come in beautifully, for we have lamb for dinner to-night and my two men will like the mint. We can leave it at the house as we go by. I think I'll take three and then I can carry one to Frances Keene; it will please her more than anything, for you remember that Kathleen is her discovery."

And so it happened that Miss Bolton returned with an empty basket and Kathleen's heart was made glad by having the money counted out to her. "Would you buy the material for my ceremonial dress or would you save it to buy more jars and sugar for my next making of preserves?" she asked. "The material for the dress will amount to just about the sum I have left."

"And then you will have nothing to buy fresh stock to go on with," the practical Ray reminded her. "I would wait for the dress."

"Perhaps that is the most practical way. But I must be getting back. Come, precious money, you must go for horrid commonplace jars instead of for a beautiful ceremonial dress. I am sorry that I must hand you over to Cyrus Prince, but that is what I must do. I hope wild strawberries will be early and plentiful this year, for I am banking on them."

She met Grace and Margaret just outside the gate and full of her subject asked them about their possible honors.

"Oh, I have picked out mine and don't expect to have much trouble with them," Margaret told her quietly. "It is really quite easy to win honors if you select the things you like to do."

"Dear me, do you think so?" asked Grace in a surprised voice.

"Of course Margaret will come sailing in ahead of us all," remarked Kathleen as she saw this eldest of their company disappear. "I believe Miss Bolton was right when she said it was meant that the girls should do what they liked best. I think I shall work out my honors in that way."

"The trouble with me is that there are so few things

I do like best to do," replied Grace, "and I am afraid that none of them are on the list."

"I mean to find out if my bests are there," declared Kathleen and straightway went home to see.

After a close reading of the lists she decided on the following: She would play one of the required games for not less than fifteen hours in any one month; she would identify fifteen trees, know the planets and seven constellations with their stories. She would make preserves and do some little laundry work. She would make a shirt-waist, trim a hat and make two articles of underwear. She would learn a thousand lines of poetry and six Indian legends to recite.

"There," she exclaimed as she closed her book after making out her list, "I think I shall have good times as well as the rest, but I should really like to know how long it will take me." Then she hunted up a book of poetry she had in mind and sat down to study the first instalment of her thousand lines.

CHAPTER VIII

JAM

THE next Monday morning Mrs. Furnival and Judy Falkner motored over from Weston to invite Miss Bolton, the Hovey girls and Kathleen to afternoon tea. All the girls but Margaret were at school, but Miss Bolton thought she could promise for them.

"What about Kathleen's jelly?" she said as she saw them to the car. "Was it good?"

"Oh, yes, very good," answered Mrs. Furnival with a glance at Judy who suppressed a little laugh.

Leaving Margaret on the porch Miss Bolton followed her guests to the car which was waiting for them. "What was the matter with that jelly?" she asked. "I know something was wrong from the way you two looked. Did it melt?"

"Dear me, no, it was as solid as need be," Mrs. Furnival assured her, "and the men liked it immensely."

"Then what was it? I know there was something."

Mrs. Furnival leaned over and whispered: "It didn't have a particle of sugar in it, but please don't tell that

blessed child, I wouldn't have her know for the world. It wasn't at all bad, you know, and I think the men really liked it the better for its not being sweet, so if you have any consideration for my friendship you must promise not to tell a soul." And Miss Bolton promised.

It was a beautiful walk to Weston which lay a little higher than Brightwood on the side of the mountain rather than in the valley. The more level road led around the foot of the mountain, but for those who did not mind the climb the direct way was much more fascinating.

"How pretty it is," said Kathleen, pausing to look down upon the clustering roofs. "I wish we lived in Weston."

"Wait till we get through with Brightwood," replied Margaret. "You won't know it five years from now. Every one of us is going to plant five trees apiece on Arbor Day, and we are going to try to induce the town to allow the children in the schools to plant trees all along the streets, and then if each one makes a garden in front of his or her house, think what an improvement it will be."

Kathleen looked sober. "Every place will look pretty but ours, for Auntie doesn't want either trees or a garden, neither does Uncle James. They say it makes the place damp and besides litters it up."

"If all their neighbors do it, maybe they will come around to a different way of thinking."

But Kathleen shook her head and they went on.

Judy was on the watch for them and ran out as soon as she saw the group approaching. It was surprising how much there was to talk about. Mrs. Furnival took Ray down to look at her garden, Judy bore Kathleen off to the library to show her certain books. These two last mentioned lingered so long that at last Mrs. Furnival had to hunt them up, but they had been having a good talk and were ready to join the rest.

Judy confided to Kathleen that she was glad to get away from the city once in a while. "My people are perfect dears," she said, "but they think I am sort of daffy to want to do the things I do, like cooking and sewing; Mamma cannot understand it in the least. I really had an awfully hard time persuading her to allow me to join the Camp-Fire Girls. However, she is much more reconciled now, since she finds how much better physically I am and how much happier."

"My aunt and uncle were opposed at first, but for just the opposite reasons," Kathleen told her. "They were afraid I would neglect my domestic duties, that I wouldn't want to cook and sew and all that. They

were afraid I might want to go about too much. They don't believe much in girls having fun, or company. They think they should stay at home and be perfectly content to enjoy what they find within the four walls of a house."

"Isn't that an odd way of looking at it?" said Judy thoughtfully. "And isn't it queer that we two should have arrived at being Camp-Fire Girls through such very different avenues? But then that is the beauty of it, for it is for all sorts and kinds, a great sisterhood, yet appealing to such a variety of tastes. Have you your ceremonial dress yet?"

"Oh, dear no. I am waiting for the wild strawberries to get ripe, for I am depending upon them to earn me the money. I am going to gather all I can for preserves."

"How perfectly delicious they will be. Do save me a jar, a good big one, that is if you have enough to spare."

Just here Mrs. Furnival interrupted them. "Well, here you two are. We have been wondering what had become of you," she said. "What are you talking about?"

"Strawberry jam," Judy answered. "Can you conceive of anything more delicious than a jam made of wild strawberries? Kathleen is going to make some

and has promised to save me a big jar. If you want any you'd better speak quick, for I warn you it will go off like hot cakes."

"Oh, I speak and speak loud. I will take two big jars, if you can let me have them, Kathleen."

It was not long before the time came when strawberries should be ready to gather, and Kathleen exulted in the thought that she would have her ceremonial dress ready for the first Council Fire. On this occasion Margaret would be ready to take the rank of Wood Gatherer, and the other girls would receive certain honors. They had been busy practising the ceremonial step, the ceremony of fire lighting, the hand sign of fire, the songs and other necessary things, so they were expectant and happy as the day drew near. All the ceremonial dresses were ready but Kathleen's and this Margaret had promised to help her make as soon as she wished. To tell the truth, the material was on hand, for Miss Bolton had sent for it, although Kathleen had doggedly insisted that she would not have it till she could pay for it.

Picking strawberries was a long and wearisome task, but Kathleen persevered, and late in the afternoon came into the Hoveys' kitchen a finger-stained, footsore and very weary girl.

"Why, you poor child," cried the motherly Mrs.

Hovey, "do sit down and cool off. You don't mean to say you picked all those yourself."

"Every one," replied Kathleen proudly. "Didn't I get a nice lot?"

"I should say you did. You will never get them hulled by yourself though, and they should be done this evening. Here, girls," she went to the foot of the stairs and called. "Come down here, all hands of you. We must all pitch in and have a hulling bee so as to help Kathleen get these right on."

The three girls, as well as Miss Bolton, answered the call, and all turned to with a will, and, tedious though the work would have been for one pair of hands, it was soon accomplished by many, so before long the jam was simmering upon the back of the stove.

"Now you won't want to leave it," said Mrs. Hovey, "so you just stay to supper and make yourself comfortable about it. I'll go over myself and make it all right with your aunt."

Therefore the delightful and exciting work of making the jam was allowed to proceed without interruption and before the evening was over three large jars and two small glasses were displayed to the admiring gaze of all interested. A little left over Kathleen insisted should be tasted by the family. "As a sort of rent for the use of your fire," she ex-

plained. The full jars she would take home when they were cool.

"I declare I never saw nicer jam," Mrs. Hovey was unstinted in her praise. "You ought to let your aunt and uncle try it, Kathleen. They certainly ought to be proud of you."

So Kathleen determined that she would offer up one of the small glasses as a sacrifice upon the family altar. She did so upon the very next evening, which happened to be Sunday, and received more appreciation than usual.

"I confess I didn't expect it of you," said her uncle. "You see, Sue, what it is to have an example like yourself. Well, Kathleen, you may turn out a good housekeeper yet, and that is more than I would have been willing to say a year ago."

"Gee, but it's good," was Jimmy's comment. "I wish you'd make some more."

As for Mrs. Wyatt, she did not say much, but Kathleen could see that she was well pleased, for she made no criticism.

It was the next morning, however, that she gave evidence of her real appreciation of Kathleen's powers, for she announced that she thought Kathleen had proved that she wasn't a fool and that she didn't know but this was as good a time as any for her to make a

little visit. The weather was fine, and she had been promising a long time to go over to see Maria Stebbins. She would stay only a few days and James could come for her. It would be a good chance for him to see his sister, and she guessed they wouldn't starve while she was gone. "I'll tell you just what to have," she said to Kathleen, "and I did a good baking on Saturday, so I think you can manage."

It was rather an astounding proposition, but Kathleen did not flinch. It would give her an opportunity to win some more honors. "I am sure I can get along," she said cheerfully. "I will do my best, and hope I won't forget anything."

"If you get into any trouble, just call on Mrs. Hovey to help you out. You'll be only too glad of a chance to get over there, I suppose."

So Kathleen saw her aunt go off and had no fears. Wednesday Mr. Wyatt drove over to his sister's to bring home his wife and Jimmy decided that he would take a lunch to school and later in the day would go off with some of the boys and have a feast in the woods, therefore Kathleen was left alone. She dined with the Hoveys and returned there after school to work on her ceremonial dress which she was now sure of paying for. Late in the afternoon she went home to get the jars of pre-

serves which Miss Bolton had promised to deliver to Mrs. Furnival.

She went gaily to the pantry, but the cheerful little song died on her lips as she saw but a solitary jar on the shelf where she had left the entire lot. Where were the rest?

After a long search she concluded that Jimmy had hid them to tease her. Of course she had not told him, nor had she told any of the family, what she intended to do with the jam. It was just like one of Jimmy's tricks. Then a panic seized her; suppose a thief had taken them? But this notion was soon dispelled, for nothing else was missing, and it was not in the nature of things to suppose that there were thieves who had a fancy for strawberry jam alone, when there were other eatables and more preserves on the pantry shelves.

Deciding that there was nothing to be gained by further search she sat down patiently to wait Jimmy's return. He would be back by supper time, for no matter how lordly the afternoon feast Jimmy would not miss one regular meal, and could be expected to return in ample season.

About six o'clock he came swinging along, bursting into the kitchen with the usual inquiry, "Supper ready?"

"No, it isn't," returned Kathleen tartly, "and it won't be, Jimmy Wyatt, until you tell me where you have hidden my strawberry jam."

"I haven't hidden your old jam," replied Jimmy sullenly.

"Then where is it? I put three jars and a tumbler on that shelf in the pantry and there is only one left. If you didn't take it, who did?"

"I only took the tumbler for our feast. It was so licking good and I thought I had as much right to it as father."

"As your father? What do you mean?"

"Why, didn't you know? He took two jars of it to Aunt Maria. He said he wanted to show her what a famous cook you were getting to be. She always vowed you'd never amount to anything as a—— Why, Kath, what is the matter?" for Kathleen had sunk down upon a chair by the table and was sobbing as if her heart would break. "You don't care what old Aunt Maria says or thinks; she is nothing to you."

"It isn't Aunt Maria, it is the jam," quavered Kathleen. "I made it to sell, and it was all engaged at a big price, and now I can't pay for—for my ceremonial dress and I won't have a cent to start in again to make money."

"Whew!" Jimmy whistled. "I say, that's tough,

Kath. Why didn't you tell us what you were doing it for? We didn't know. We thought it was for us here at home. I'm awfully sorry. I wouldn't have taken it if I had known. There is still one jar left, you know, and that will bring you something, enough to start again, won't it?"

"I—I don't know, and it isn't only the money but it is the time, and besides I shall never never be able to get so many again. I worked so hard picking them and I gathered so many in that one place. I don't know any other spot where there are so many."

Jimmy was completely sobered, but all he could do was to repeat: "I'm awfully sorry."

Realizing that it was really not his fault Kathleen at last arose, being alive to the fact that Jimmy wanted his supper. She ate nothing herself, and more than once the tears coursed down her cheeks, at sight of which Jimmy was manifestly uneasy. He was rather a dull boy, but he was really fond of his cousin and would like to have made good her loss, but he had no means of comforting her, and when the dismal meal was over he sauntered out saying: "I'll be back early. You won't be afraid here by yourself, will you?"

"Nothing any worse could happen than already has done," replied Kathleen forlornly. "Margaret is com-

ing over to stay all night, so you need not feel anxious about me."

Therefore, rather glad to escape from so melancholy an atmosphere, Jimmy went out and a moment later Kathleen heard his cheerful whistle as he sauntered off down the street to join his friends.

CHAPTER IX

RESTITUTION

SAD thoughts are not very good company, and Kathleen was too young to care to harbor them long, so she decided to take her trouble to Miss Bolton who had promised to be her friend in need. Carrying her one remaining jar of jam she crossed the street, and appeared a red-eyed, forlorn little figure before the Guardian of her Camp-Fire.

Ray and Grace had gone into Tilda Eckert's, and in the dusk of the evening Kathleen's tear-stains were not noticed by Margaret who opened the door for her. "I just wanted to see Miss Bolton," said Kathleen.

"Well, run right up," Margaret bade her cheerfully. "Mother and I aren't quite through in the kitchen. You will find Miss Bolton in her room."

Kathleen went up to find Miss Bolton sitting by the window watching the afterglow which lingered in the sky and warmed to a faint heliotrope the crests of the mountains. At sound of her warm words of greeting all Kathleen's trouble came back afresh and her tears burst forth again. Tremblingly she set down her jar

on the table, rushed forward and fell on her knees, burying her face in Miss Bolton's lap and sobbing convulsively.

"Why, Kathleen, child, what in the world is it?" asked Miss Bolton in alarm. "Have you had bad news? Has any accident happened?"

"No, no, it's—it's the jam," Kathleen managed to sob out.

"The jam? Why, what has gone wrong with it? Did you drop a jar, or what?"

By degrees Kathleen managed to make known her story. "It is hard," Miss Bolton said sympathetically, "but Kathleen, dear, sit up and dry your eyes. You must not take it so tragically. Let us talk it over and see if we can't get some good out of it. In the first place, you do not have to go without your dress nor your head-band. You know some Camp-Fires club together and buy all such things as a whole and not individually. We have adopted the other plan, but it is optional."

"All the other girls have bought theirs and I don't want to be the only one not to," complained Kathleen.

"I respect your spirit of independence, my dear child, and you can still have the pleasure of buying your own dress. It is only a question of paying for it a little later."

"It takes all the joy out of it to feel I have a debt hanging over me," Kathleen replied unhappily.

"Then let us see if we cannot find joy in some other direction. Already your jam has given pleasure to several people and that should be some compensation. There are many things which money can never buy, and I should not be surprised if you were to find out that your jam has furnished you something more valuable than you suspect. Why do you suppose your uncle took the jars to his sister?"

"Oh, I suppose he wanted the glory of making her a present, of giving her something particularly nice."

"Do you think that was his only reason? I am inclined to think it went a little deeper. Don't you think that he was proud to show what you could do, and didn't that express more interest in you than he usually shows, more appreciation?"

"Yes, perhaps so," Kathleen confessed a little dubiously. Then she added truthfully: "Jimmy said he told him he was going to take it to Aunt Maria to show her what a famous cook I was getting to be. Aunt Maria never liked me very much."

"Why?"

Kathleen searched around for a reason. "Because I am poor and dependent, I suppose. She thinks Aunt

Sue and Uncle James are such saints for letting me come here, and for supporting me."

"It is pretty good of them," acknowledged Miss Bolton; "they need not have done it, you know."

"But there was nowhere else for me to go, and I am Auntie's own brother's child."

"Just the same there are some who would not have done it. Even if an aunt were willing to do it, her husband could maintain that you had no claim on him and he might very well refuse."

"Then I would have had to go to an orphan asylum," said Kathleen in a horror-stricken voice.

"Precisely."

The girl's head drooped lower until her face was again hidden in Miss Bolton's lap. She felt a kind hand stroking her hair, but her spirit arose in rebellion at these home thrusts. Presently she lifted her head defiantly. "I couldn't help it," she said.

"Dear little girl, of course you couldn't, but considering that not one drop of Mr. Wyatt's blood runs in your veins, don't you think that you should be a little glad of an opportunity to give him pleasure since he has given you a home, has clothed you, fed you, educated you? I don't suppose you have many chances to show your appreciation, but when you do, I am sure you want to do it."

"I never do. I always take things as a matter of course. I can't help it when they act as if I ought to be forever saying how grateful I am. Auntie is always telling me that I ought to be thankful for what I have ; she says it as if I were a beggar to whom she was giving cold pieces."

"Oh, dearest child, I wonder if you don't imagine that. I thought she seemed rather proud and fond of you."

"She takes pains not to show it then."

"Just as you take pains to let her see that you take everything as your right?"

"Oh, Miss Bolton!"

"Didn't you just tell me so? Forgive me, dear, but I am trying so very, very hard to find that bit of joy. Will you tell me just how you do show your appreciation? Of course one doesn't have to go around saying every other breath, 'Thank you, dear aunt, for my bread and butter. Thank you, dear uncle, for the roof over my head.' One doesn't have to be a crawling sycophant in order to show what one really feels. Now let us go back to the beginning and see what our Camp-Fire Law can do. You give service of course, but do you do it cheerfully?"

"Not always, I am afraid."

"How about being trustworthy?"

"Sometimes I am and sometimes I am not. Very often I am in a hurry, and I just slick over things, because I want to get at something I really like."

"Nice honest child. You don't want to miss being a real home-maker, do you? Every woman should learn to be that, and you are having a wonderful apprenticeship. If you haven't realized that and do your work perfunctorily you do not glorify it and you are not happy. So, no matter how many honors you may be earning, you miss the real core and fibre of the Camp-Fire."

"I never looked at it in that way," confessed Kathleen thoughtfully.

"Now while we are getting down to such intimate facts, I will tell you something that you must fight against, and that is self-pity. Older persons than yourself are given to it, and it keeps them from more happiness than they have any conception of. I am afraid it is going to be your giant unless you kill it while you have youthful strength, but you have only to find the seven smooth stones from the brook, and take your sling, and I am sure you will come off victor."

Kathleen looked up with a smile. "Like a sort of girl David," she said.

"Exactly. Now, you know it is that miserable old Ego of ours which makes us so ready to create griev-

ances rather than to count our benefits. You think you are to be pitied because you have to work harder than some of the other girls, that you live in an uncongenial household, that you never receive praise nor appreciation. Well, we will acknowledge that you have some reason for complaint, but suppose you were one of the great army of toilers in factories, in sweat-shops, in other places, who never stop work from one day's end to another, snatching barely time enough for a few hours' sleep, earning only a pittance, hardly enough to keep soul and body together, whose only home is a vile tenement, who never know a holiday, never see a blade of grass or a green tree or a sunset, would you not be a thousand times worse off? When your surroundings are so infinitely much better than theirs should you not find some joy in life?"

"Oh, dear Miss Bolton, what a horrid girl you are making me out."

"You are anything but a horrid girl; you are merely a little kitten that hasn't its eyes open. You are a dear lovable child whose friends love her dearly, and whose relatives do, too, if I am not mistaken, even though you may say they take a queer way to show it. You have so much good in you that it hurts me to think that certain faults may get the best of you. Do you know the very best way to get clear sight, true

mental vision, is to put yourself in the place of some other? Suppose you sit there for a few minutes and imagine yourself your aunt and then your uncle, then tell me what you can see."

Kathleen's hand found Miss Bolton's warm clasp and both were silent for a little while. It had grown quite dark, but the stars were sprinkling the sky and the air was sweet with the breath of blossomy trees.

After a while Kathleen lifted her head which had been resting on Miss Bolton's knee. "The kitten is beginning to see," she began, "and she sees a mighty mean, selfish, ungrateful thing with two legs and a red nose."

"Then she has only one eye open," said Miss Bolton laughing. "Does she see anything that looks like compensation for loss, anything that looks like a girl who is going to be glad of what seemed calamity? Does she see Dawn of Day, Thurénsera?"

"Oh, dear Sebowisha!" Kathleen's hand clasped her friend's convulsively, "you make me ashamed. How far I am from living up to my name. I do believe I am beginning to see more. Just now, when you put me in Auntie's place, I remembered that only the other day I told her I was sick of it all, and that it was an ugly, stupid house, an ugly, stupid town with nothing but ugly, stupid people in it. I am all the

time saying such things, and of course they hurt her feelings. Oh, Miss Bolton, that orphan asylum! suppose I were there instead of here. I am ashamed, I am, and I am glad Uncle took the jam and I am glad Jimmy did, too. Poor Jimmy, he was so really distressed; I never saw Jimmy so troubled."

Miss Bolton leaned over and kissed her. "Dear kitten, both your eyes are open and I verily believe we have found our joy."

"We have, indeed we have, but I should never have found it but for you. I shall never forget this talk to my dying day. Why, here is a new cause for thankfulness, for new joy. I have learned what it means to have a true friend like you, and I have learned, oh, so much I can't speak of."

"And all because your uncle made off with the jam. Thurénsera, the dawn is breaking."

"It will indeed be breaking if I don't go home," Kathleen responded. "Jimmy will be wondering what has become of me, and Margaret will think I am going to stay here all night, instead of having her stay with me."

They both arose and Kathleen put her arms around the small figure of her friend. "You do love me a little, don't you?" she asked wistfully.

"I never loved you so much, and I am going to love

you more and more, I plainly see," was the highly satisfactory answer, given with a hearty kiss.

Jimmy was nodding in his father's big chair when Kathleen and Margaret entered. He looked up apprehensively at his cousin who smiled brightly at him. "I hope we haven't kept you up, Jimmy," she said. "We'll go around with you and help lock up." As they were bolting the front door she whispered: "Don't worry about the jam. I am glad you had it for your feast." Jimmy stared at her. "Really I am," she insisted.

"I wish I had the money to pay you for it," Jimmy blurted out.

"Oh, don't say such a thing." Kathleen recoiled a step or two. "You are very welcome to it."

But Jimmy was all the more concerned about the matter after her words. It wasn't like Kathleen to take a thing so sweetly, and to tell him he was welcome, when he knew what a sacrifice it meant, was a little too much for even happy-go-lucky Jimmy, and he awoke the next morning with his mind fully made up to compensate his cousin in the only way he could. It was in Jimmy's nature to find an easy way of getting around things, and so he made up his mind that he would press two or three of his cronies into service, and go strawberry gathering that very afternoon. He

knew a place where they were pretty thick, if no one else had happened to find it.

Therefore not long before supper Jimmy returned bearing his sheaves, or rather his strawberries, with him. As might be expected Kathleen was over at the Hoveys'. He went around to the kitchen door, basket in hand. "Kath here?" he asked laconically.

"She is just inside there with Margaret," Ray told him.

"Tell her to come out; I've got something for her."

Without waiting to learn what the something was Ray went to call Kathleen who came out to see Jimmy waiting with his basket.

"Oh, Jimmy, it isn't quite supper time," began Kathleen.

But Jimmy cut her short with "Supper nothin'. See what I've got for you," and he uncovered his basket to display a ruddy hoard.

"Oh, Jimmy!" Kathleen clasped her hands and looked from the strawberries to the sunburnt, good-natured countenance of her cousin. "You didn't get all those for me."

"Sure," returned Jimmy. "At least I didn't get 'em all myself; the fellows helped me. I say, Kath, do you think they will make up for the other lot?"

"Why, of course. Jimmy, you darling boy, I don't

know how to thank you. If you didn't hate it so much I would kiss you."

"That's all right," began Jimmy confusedly; then Mrs. Hovey came out.

"What is all this?" she asked. "More strawberries, as I live. Did you bring them, Jimmy? Well, you are a boy after my own heart. Just see here, girls," she called in to her daughters.

They came flocking out, and made so much of the matter that Jimmy, quite exalted by his act, thought he would add to his generosity by saying: "I'll help you hull 'em, if you want me to."

"I'll tell you what let's do," exclaimed Ray; "we'll get a lot of the boys and girls after supper and all pitch in. The one that gets through first shall have a prize. We will divide the berries up into equal portions; you have a lot of those little fruit baskets, mother, that will be just the thing, and then afterward we can have a frolic. What do you all say to it?"

"Just the thing," decided Mrs. Hovey. "Come, Margaret, let's get supper on so we can have the place clear." One of the nice things about Mrs. Hovey was that she never forgot her own youth, and enjoyed having young folks about.

"Suppose you go hunt up the boys while Kathleen gets your supper, Jimmy," proposed Margaret.

"Who'll I get?" inquired Jimmy nothing loth.

"Let me see; Sig Eckert, Charley Richards and Billy Bodine are the nearest, aren't they? I think that will be enough unless you should happen to run across Walter Northrup or Harvey Dean."

"Suppose I run across them both?"

"Then ask them both; the more the merrier. We'll get Tilda to come in; she is always such fun."

So off sped Jimmy while Kathleen flew home to get the supper ready betimes.

Never was such a lot of berries capped in so short a time. It seemed incredible. The girls had divided them carefully, taking pains that it should be a just division, and almost before you could say Jack Robinson they were all done.

"You might weigh out your fruit and sugar and let it boil up once," Mrs. Hovey advised Kathleen, "and then you can set it aside and finish your jam any time to-morrow. There is no use your spending your time in the kitchen when there is fun going on somewhere else."

Kathleen took this advice and, with Ray to keep her company, started her jam according to directions.

"You will get another honor for this," said Ray, "so it has turned out all for the best after all."

"Don't tell me that," responded Kathleen. "I am

thinking of it every blessed minute. When I think how many lovely things have come from what seemed a misfortune I am reminded of nothing so much as of a dull brown bulb, away down in the earth away from the sun, and the first thing you know out starts a whole lot of beautiful, gay flowers."

Ray looked at her with a mystified expression. "You certainly are a funny girl, Kath," she said. "I don't know another soul who would think of such a thing."

"Miss Bolton would," returned Kathleen, and then the jam being ready to set aside, they were drawn to the parlor where merry strains of music and sounds of jollity had been inviting them for some time.

"Hurry up, girls," cried Tilda as they entered. "We are dying to know what the prize is. Mrs. Hovey won't tell us. You know Billy Bodine won it."

Billy Bodine, a slim, bright-eyed little fellow, lithe and brisk in his movements, snickered audibly, and Jimmy punched him into silence, for Miss Bolton was about to speak.

"I am requested by Mrs. Hovey," she began, "to present to Mr. Billy Bodine this valuable prize for his wonderful feat in hulling a pint of wild strawberries in less time than such an act has ever been performed before in this town. Mr. Bodine has won the cham-

pionship of Brightwood since he has distanced all competitors. Permit me, Mr. Bodine."

She handed Billy a mysterious looking package which he received in an embarrassed manner, not knowing exactly what to do or say.

"Say something, Bill," Jimmy nudged him.

"Ah-h, what's the matter?" growled Billy.

"Open it, Bill, open it," came the cry from all sides, and thus driven, Billy complied, opened the parcel carefully, and disclosed a loaf of fresh gingerbread. Instantly there was a scuffle. Every boy fell upon him to detach what he could snatch, and in a few minutes the gingerbread had absolutely disappeared, but nobody minded, Billy least of all, for it was great fun while it lasted.

Then they fell to playing games, and at last Ray proposed that each Camp-Fire girl should try to win an honor by teaching some one of the boys four of the dances mentioned in the list given in the Manual. The boys held off at first, but when it was explained to them that these special dances were rather more like games, they finally came to the front and entered into them with spirit. Miss Bolton played the merry reels and jigs, and though the boys were clumsy and were inclined to romp through the figures, they enjoyed it, and were quite ready for more gingerbread when Mrs.

Hovey brought it in, while the fact that it was supplemented by lemonade made them value the occasion as a veritable social event which they referred to as "a party" when they spoke of it afterward.

"More joy and more and more. It grows and grows," whispered Kathleen as she kissed Miss Bolton good-night. "This is the first time I ever knew you could have your cake and could eat it. My jam has been eaten and yet I have it. It sounds like a fairy tale."

"Fairy tales are often true tales," replied Miss Bolton. "I am glad you are finding that out. There are miracles happening, too, and we are so used to them that we don't notice them."

Kathleen nodded understandingly, but there was no other among them all who would have comprehended, unless it should be Margaret.

"I say," said Jimmy as he crossed the street with his cousin, "didn't we have a high old time? I guess after all it was a good thing that father carried off that jam."

"It was the best thing that ever happened to me," returned Kathleen, and strange to say, the usually dull Jimmy knew exactly what she meant.

CHAPTER X

A WOOD GATHERER

FROM this time forth Kathleen and Jimmy had more in common. Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt returned the next day, the better for the change, although they seemed glad to get home. Mrs. Wyatt gave a critical eye to the house in general and actually had the grace to say: "Well, you did pretty well, considering, Kathleen. I didn't look for perfection. Did Mrs. Hovey send over these biscuits?" she asked as they sat down to the supper which Kathleen had prepared with great care.

"No, siree, she didn't," spoke up Jimmy. "Kathleen made them. I tell you she is going to be the whole show after a while."

His mother gave him a surprised look. It was not Jimmy's habit to take up the cudgels for his cousin, but Mrs. Wyatt realized that the question of food was a very vital one to her son and she passed by the remark to take up a biscuit and examine it. She made no comment, but Kathleen noticed that she ate quite as many as any one, with the exception of Jimmy.

In a day or two things had settled back into their old rut, and the next excitement was the Council Fire when the girls would wear the ceremonial dress for the first time, and when Margaret would take her rank of Wood Gatherer. The Camp-Fire now numbered nine, for Adelaide Black and Anna Metz had joined the number.

Among those who plodded their way up the mountain to the chosen spot by the old chimney, probably not one wore her dress with more delight than Kathleen. The jam had been duly paid for and she owed not a penny. She had earned several honors and when the time for the next Council Fire should come around she hoped to become a Wood Gatherer. Ray had the same expectation, but it was uncertain whether any other would be ready.

"Isn't it wonderful," said Kathleen as she and Ray followed a little in the rear of the others, "only a little while ago we were watching Judy, Miss Keene and the rest having their Council Fire and now all those things that seemed so mysterious will be done by us."

"And it all came about through an accident, which seemed such a misfortune at the time. Are we to light the fire with the rubbing-sticks?"

"I think so, for we want this outdoor meeting to be

as picturesque as possible. It will take longer but it will be more interesting."

"But first comes supper, for we do not light the Council Fire till sunset. I look forward to that moment as the most beautiful."

"Beautiful it may be, but for my part after that long walk I confess that I am glad supper comes first," confessed Ray honestly.

And a good supper it was besides being a very jolly one. Bacon and fresh fish were cooked on flat stones heated for the purpose, muffins were toasted. There was potato salad, there was gingerbread, and last of all, fruit. There was no lack of appetite either, by the time it was all ready, and it is safe to say that what was left would not have fed a toy terrier, and then, the last rays of the sun touching the mountain top, they made the preparations to light their Council Fire.

There being no Wood Gatherers as yet the girls all helped to gather the fagots which they laid at the edge of the circle, and from there Miss Bolton took them to lay the fire. Then, using the ceremonial council step, the little procession wound its way from the woods to receive from their Guardian, who stood within the circle, the hand sign of fire and to give it in return. The lighting of the fire came next and this was not accomplished without some labor, although some of the

girls had practiced diligently with the rubbing-sticks. More was required than the mere rubbing together of two ordinary sticks, for what was provided was a board with a number of depressions in it, a stick with a movable handle, and a bow with a leathern thong. After winding the thong around the stick the girl grasped the handle and sawed away with the bow until a spark should appear. To Margaret was given the task, since she was a prospective Wood Gatherer, and the rest watched her eagerly, sitting Indian-like on the ground. After what seemed long and strenuous effort Linda declared she could smell the wood igniting, but just here the handle slipped and flew from its place. One of the girls snatched it and fitted it back. "Quick! Quick!" cried Ray. "You will lose all the heat you have gathered," and Margaret redoubled her efforts, although strength was fast ebbing.

"Keep it up! Keep it up!" cried Kathleen excitedly. "May I take one end, Sebowisha?"

Permission obtained, Kathleen bent her energies to helping Margaret move the bow rapidly back and forth, and in a little while some one cried: "It's coming! I see the smoke!" and sure enough a faint curling wreath drifted up from the hole in the board, and in a few minutes another exclaimed, "There is a spark! Get the tinder!"

Carefully piling the tinder on top of the feeble spark and gently blowing, the girls watched eagerly until the fire finally burst into a blaze. Then with the Wohelo ceremony the fagots were lighted and all rose to their feet to sing: "Wohelo for aye!"

After the count of the last ceremonial meeting came the report which each girl must give of some kind deed she had seen performed within the past week. Ray had forgotten to prepare for this and searched around in her mind for a proper example. At last she said: "The only thing I can think of is that I saw a boy drive away a dog that had treed a cat. The cat had been there a long time, I believe he said. He held the dog and let the cat get down."

"And was there any expression of appreciation?" inquired Miss Bolton.

"I didn't notice any," replied Ray; "the cat just walked away."

A general laugh went up and Miss Bolton said: "I didn't expect the cat to say much, but I thought maybe you did."

"I believe I did clap my hands and say: 'Good boy, Billy!' It was Billy Bodine's cat, but the dog belonged to some one else; that made the difference."

The girls laughed again. It was quite a different re-

port from most of the others, and they could not treat it with much seriousness.

After the laughter had subsided the girls who had earned honors received their pretty beads, flame-colored ones for Home Craft, blue like the sky for Nature Lore, blood-red for Health Craft and so on.

And next they welcomed their first Wood Gatherer, Margaret, who received her ring and told why she chose the name of Huhpátka. "It means an Ear of Corn," she said, "and I have chosen that for my symbol. It represents much in little. One ear of corn will plant many hillocks which will feed a number of persons, so I hope by small things to do my part, to do small deeds of kindness which will help to brighten the world, to do many little household duties which will make the family comfortable and happy, to set many small stitches which will complete whole garments."

Then came the remainder of the ceremony which ended in the Wohelo song and this serious part being over there followed songs, games and a pretty folk dance which Margaret and Kathleen had learned to dance together. After a talk from Miss Bolton they discovered that it was getting late. The stars were out. Their day was over.

So they went down the mountain and Kathleen did not get home till after dark, though she would fain

have lingered longer. She managed to interest the family in her account of the Council Fire, and quite excited Jimmy's envy by a description of the supper. "Gee!" he said. "I wish I had been there."

"Didn't you have supper enough at home?" asked his father severely.

"Oh, yes, enough, but Kath made it sound so good; besides it's lots more fun to have it outdoors. Didn't you think so when you were a boy, father?"

"I believe I did," replied Mr. Wyatt after a moment's silence. Then he said reminiscently: "Do you remember the time we went to Blue Notch, Sue, and got caught in the rain?"

Mrs. Wyatt nodded, while a smile played around the corners of her mouth.

"Oh, tell us about it, Uncle James," begged Kathleen, and her uncle, nothing loth to be narrator himself, told how a party of young people had gone on a picnic up the mountain, and how a thunder-storm had come up so they had to take shelter in an old tumble-down house which had been partly destroyed by fire.

"Is it still standing?" Kathleen interrupted him by asking.

"Nothing but the chimney left, or there wasn't when I saw it last. Very likely that has gone now."

"I wonder if it could be the same place where we

had our Camp-Fire to-day," said Kathleen excitedly. "Is it a little to the right as you go over the mountain on the road to Weston? It isn't right on top of the mountain, but on the side where you see our valley and the second mountain folding over on the other."

"The very place," Mr. Wyatt declared. "You don't say that's where you've been this afternoon. Well, well!" He was inclined to fall into a contemplative mood, but Kathleen would hear more.

"Tell us how you got home," she said.

He chuckled as he made reply: "That's where the fun came in. It was muddy and Sue——"

"Now, James, I wouldn't tell that," Mrs. Wyatt protested.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Go on, Uncle, tell us," begged Kathleen.

In spite of shakes of the head and, "Now hush," from Mrs. Wyatt, he did go on, saying, "It was muddy as I told you, for the roads weren't as good then as they are now. Sue had on slippers and she lost one in the mud and couldn't find it."

"Couldn't find it? Why not? Was it so dark?" asked Kathleen.

"Now, James, I think you've said enough; it's time to stop." Mrs. Wyatt continued her protests.

But with both Kathleen and Jimmy to encourage him Mr. Wyatt was ready to continue his tale.

"She couldn't find her slipper, so she hobbled along as best she could till her stocking was so weighted with mud that she could scarcely get on and she and one of the others lagged so far behind the rest that at last she declared she would take off the other shoe and both stockings, which she did and went home barefoot."

A shout of laughter went up from Kathleen and Jimmy while Mrs. Wyatt, blushing and expostulating, declared it was too bad and it wasn't a thing that should have been told. Kathleen had never seen her uncle in so jolly a mood, and did not know that in stirring up memories of his youthful days she had set free springs of bygone delights from which even now he could drink.

"Did she ever find the slipper?" asked Jimmy when the laughter had subsided.

"Yes, she did," Mrs. Wyatt spoke up. "She found it afterward in James Wyatt's pocket."

This time the laugh was on Mr. Wyatt but he joined in with the rest, and declared he would do it over again if he were a youngster. "And you may not believe it," he nodded at Kathleen, "but I still have the slipper."

"Silly old goose that you are," put in his wife.

Her uncle in the light of an ardent lover and her aunt in that of a coy maiden rather bewildered Kathleen. Staid, matter-of-fact people, who seemed to scorn sentiment and romance, and yet had once done such things. It was food for thought.

"You must have had good times when you were young," remarked she after a little thought.

"As I look back upon it, I think we did. I was saying that same thing to Maria the other day. But, bless me, it is long past bedtime. How the evening has gone. It was just so at Maria's when we got to talking about old times ; we never seemed to know when to go to bed."

It was a tired and sleepy Kathleen who went up to her room, but for all that she lingered some time before she went to bed. So many strange things were happening. After all it wasn't the town which was stupid ; it must have been a pleasant enough place to live in those days when Susan Wyatt was Susan Gilman, and probably there were good times for every one if they only had wit enough to find them out.

She knelt at the window looking out toward the mountain. Over there her aunt had lived her romance. Over there were the ashes of the afternoon's Council Fire. In fancy again Kathleen saw the leaping flames, saw the little procession stealing out from the shadows,

saw Margaret, sweet and serious, receiving her rank of Wood Gatherer, saw the girls treading their pretty dances, and dreamily she repeated the lines which she had heard Miss Bolton say to Margaret after she had given her the ring. She knew them well, for she had learned them from her Manual, and loved them :

“ As fagots are brought from the forest
Firmly held by the sinews which bind them,
So cleave to these others, your sisters,
Wherever, whenever you find them.

“ Be strong as the fagots are sturdy ;
Be pure in your deepest desire ;
Be true to the truth that is in you ;
And—follow the law of the Fire.”

“Soon she will be saying that to me,” murmured Kathleen. “Wohelo means work. Wohelo means health. Wohelo means love.” Then she rose from her knees.

CHAPTER XI

GARDENS

KATHLEEN and Ray were trimming over their last summer's hats, not because they needed them particularly, but because it would mean a green bead gained for a Hand Craft honor. They would wear the hats sometimes, they said, if they should happen to be pretty and becoming. They had decided to trim them at the same time that they might exchange ideas and get some fun out of it.

"How do you think green and blue look together?" asked Kathleen bunching up some ribbons and holding them against her hat.

"I don't believe I like it very much," decided Ray after looking at the effect, her head held to one side. "It looks rather grown up and sober." Ray was a person of lively taste and was trimming her own hat with pink roses and pale blue ribbons, the discarded trimmings from two hats of her sisters.

"I think it would look better if I were to put the green inside the blue and just let a little edge show," decided Kathleen after experimenting.

"Why don't you use white flowers?" suggested Ray.
"They would brighten it up."

"Oh, but I do love the blue corn-flowers," returned Kathleen. She pinned on her ribbon loops and the flowers, then went to the glass to see the result. "I don't think it is half bad," she declared. "What do you think, Ray?"

Ray still held to her opinion that she would like white better, but if Kathleen preferred it so, why she was the one to wear it.

"Do these roses look better so or so?" asked Ray. But she did not wait for an answer, for, throwing down her hat, she exclaimed, "Dear me, I nearly forgot that little new rose-bush that Mrs. Furnival gave me. I must cover it up from the hot sun or it will droop and die. I set it out last night, and meant to see to it the first thing this morning. These roses just put me in mind of it."

Kathleen laid aside her own work that she might go with her friend and they descended to the little garden over which Ray had already spent many hours. Kathleen watched, while Ray covered up her youngest bush with newspapers, and looked with envy upon the opening buds upon the others.

"Now let us go and see how the peas are getting along," proposed Ray. "I am hoping to gather enough

for a taste on Sunday. Isn't the corn growing fast? And I am going to have loads of tomatoes; enough for every-day use and for canning, too."

"If Uncle James hears that maybe he will let me plant some," returned Kathleen. "Is it too late, Ray?"

"Not if you could get some strong healthy plants. You might plant some sweet corn, too."

Kathleen declared she was going to broach the subject, but, strange to say, she did not have to, for when her prescribed hour of visiting was over and she had hurried across to her own home, she discovered Jimmy and Sig Eckert busy with spades in the back yard. "What in the world are you boys doing?" she asked.

"Making a place to plant pop-corn," replied Jimmy leaning on his spade.

"Pop-corn? Who said you might?"

"Father. I asked him last night if he ever had a patch of pop-corn when he was a boy and he said he had, then I said I didn't see any reason why I couldn't if he could, and he said he didn't either. All the boys are having them. It would be pretty late to plant the seed, but Sig is going to thin out his patch and is going to give me the extras."

"Somehow since the day of the Council Fire her uncle and aunt had seemed more human," Kathleen had told Miss Bolton. "I used to think they had al-

ways been grown up, that they were born so, but now that I know they were just like other girls and boys I don't feel half so far off from them, and I don't believe they feel so far off from Jimmy and me, for they take much more interest in what we do."

Kathleen watched the two boys turning over the earth and breaking up the clods preparatory to the planting of the corn. Here was a chance to join Jimmy in one of his enterprises. He was not allowed very many, and should be encouraged in what he did undertake.

"I don't see why you don't put in some more things," remarked Sig wiping his brow and glancing over the cleared space. "You have plenty of room."

"Oh, I reckon this will be enough for me to take care of," Jimmy replied.

"I could give you plenty of tomato plants," Sig told him. "They are nice big ones, but they are crowding the others and I am going to take up some of them."

"Ah-h, who wants tomatoes?" returned Jimmy. "I can get all I want of those, and I'm not so awfully fond of them anyway. If it was watermelons now, or—or something we fellows could take off when we go to the woods, then I'd say you're shoutin', but old tomats, no sir, not for Jimmy. I don't break my back over them."

"You old chump," returned Sig, starting to dig again, "you're no good. You're losing the opportunity of your life; perfectly good tomato plants going a-begging. If you don't want 'em yourself, consider your family."

"Humph!" responded Jimmy. "Much they consider me. Why, I almost had to get down on my knees to father to let me plant pop-corn; you'd think I was asking him for a farm, and mother will say I am fooling my time away as it is."

Sig knew this was probably all too true, and he had nothing to say to the unanswerable argument, till Kathleen spoke up and said: "Oh, Sig, if you are going to throw them away I wish I could have them. As you say, it is too good an opportunity to be lost."

"Of course you can have them," Sig returned heartily. "You can put them there along the fence and they will scarcely take up any room at all. Jimmy and I will dig up along there for you, won't we, Jim?"

"Well, I don't know," returned Jimmy a little dubiously.

"Do you good," Sig encouraged him. "Nothing like this kind of thing to develop muscle. You don't want to be a flabby fatty, do you?"

Jimmy didn't but he was not overfond of compulsory

exercise. He would walk five miles to a trout stream, and would play baseball all afternoon, or football, either, but then that wasn't called work.

"No time like the present," Sig went on, "and we have the spades right here. Come on, old sport."

"What will you do for me if I help?" asked Jimmy turning to his cousin.

"I'll help you hoe your corn," Kathleen answered promptly, and Jimmy agreed.

Concluding to wait till the deed was done Kathleen did not report her enterprise until the tomatoes were planted, and then she said casually to her aunt: "Sig Eckert gave me some perfectly fine big tomato plants, and we've put them along the back fence. Ray expects to have a fine crop, enough for the table and to can for the winter. I hope ours will turn out as well. I can put up a lot of them and make pickle out of the green ones."

"You're going to can and pickle them, are you? When did you learn so much?"

"I haven't learned yet, but I can get a recipe from Mrs. Hovey and I know I can follow it."

"I reckon you don't have to go to Mrs. Hovey for recipes. I reckon mine are as good as hers, if not better."

And Kathleen knew her plan was accepted. This

was her first triumph in establishing a garden. She knew she must progress warily, that her innovations must seem accidental rather than prearranged, and that it would never do to advance too rapidly. She consulted Miss Bolton before every move, and thus her over-zeal was wisely restrained. After the tomatoes came a rose-bush which Mrs. Furnival gave her. It was not to be supposed that any gift of Mrs. Furnival's could be treated with contempt, and so it was allowed a place in the front garden where it reigned in solitary splendor while the tomato vines grew apace in the back yard, kept in countenance by the pop-corn. It was some time before the lonely rose-bush had a neighbor, but one day a happy thought came to Kathleen. It was the day when she took a drive with Miss Bolton, and showed her the old house where her aunt and father were born. It was occupied by distant relatives who had bought it after the death of Kathleen's grandparents.

"I wonder if they will let us go into the garden," said Kathleen as they halted before the picket fence and looked over to see the old box border behind which grew sweet-williams, planted how long ago, bachelor's buttons, marigolds and such old time favorites.

"Of course they will when you have told them who

you are, and that your father and grandfather were born here. What is the name of the present owner?"

"Baxter. They are distant relations, but I do not know them. For some reason Auntie has never cared to go back to her old home. I suppose it makes her feel bad to see strangers living here. I shouldn't wonder if that were Mrs. Baxter herself." Kathleen looked toward the porch where was sitting an old lady in a lavender gown.

Miss Bolton lifted the latch of the gate and went in. The old lady arose, looked over the edge of her spectacles and advanced to the edge of the porch.

"Mrs. Baxter?" Miss Bolton spoke inquiringly.

"That is my name," the old lady answered with a little prim old-fashioned manner.

"We have driven over from Brightwood," Miss Bolton went on. "My little friend wanted to show me this old place where her father and grandfather were born. She is Kathleen Gilman."

"My grandfather was Titus Gilman," Kathleen put in.

* "Titus Gilman's granddaughter? Well, I'm sure," returned the old lady in a pleased voice. "We bought the place from Cousin Titus, but we've almost lost sight of his family. It is that way in this world; families get separated."

"We wondered if you would allow us to see the garden."

"Certainly you may," the old lady stepped down from the porch. "Go right along and walk around. There aren't many of the old plants left, but that sweet-william was here when we came. I shouldn't wonder if it were planted by your grandma, my dear. Perhaps you would like a plant of it to take home; you see there is plenty."

"How kind you are," responded the girl, then insisting that she could not give Mrs. Baxter the trouble, she took the trowel which was brought and under the old lady's directions dug up first the sweet-william, and then some chrysanthemums. To these was added a bunch of sweet-smelling roses, and then the visitors took their leave with friendly farewells and many words of thanks.

Kathleen gave a backward look as they drove off, and saw the figure of the old lady at the gate, framed by embowering trees, her lilac gown a soft bit of color in the picture. "She looks like a myrtle blossom in that green," said the girl. "Isn't she a dear? No one ever told me that she was so nice. She is not a bit like Aunt Maria, but then Aunt Maria is really no relation and Mrs. Baxter is. Oh, Miss Bolton, do you think Auntie will let me have a place in the front yard for the plants?"

"If she doesn't let you plant these she will never let you plant any," Miss Bolton answered with conviction.

Kathleen bore her treasures into the house. She found her aunt in the kitchen. "What have you there?" asked Mrs. Wyatt sharply.

"Some plants," replied Kathleen.

"Take them right outdoors. I am surprised that you should bring all that mess into the house. It will get tracked all over the floor."

"I will take them right out," Kathleen promised, "but first I want you to look at them and guess where they came from. I have been taking a drive with Miss Bolton, and where do you think we went?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Don't these remind you of anything?" Kathleen held out the little clump of sweet-william. "You won't recognize the other yet, but when it is in bloom you will. It is a chrysanthemum, the little yellow buttony kind."

A softer expression came into Mrs. Wyatt's face. "You don't mean that you have been to the old place and that these came from my mother's garden?"

"You have guessed. Mrs. Baxter gave them to me."

"Did you go inside? How did she happen to know you?"

"We stopped by the fence, and Miss Bolton asked if we might look at the garden, then we were invited in and when Mrs. Baxter found out who I was she was perfectly lovely to us and offered me these. She gave us some roses, too, but I thought Miss Bolton ought to have those. I took one for myself, though. Isn't it sweet?"

Mrs. Wyatt took the flower held out to her and as she smelt its familiar, spicy fragrance her eyes grew moist. "I know just where they grow," she said. "How my mother loved them! I remember the sweet-william, too, down there at the side of the house, and the chrysanthemums in the front garden; and to think these have come from my old home. Plant them where you like, Kathleen. They seem a bit of old times."

And so began Kathleen's garden. From time to time she added to it, and in her own enthusiastic way worked early and late. She weeded, she hoed, she planted, she watered. She borrowed a lawn-mower and cut the grass. She dug up the weeds from between the bricks of the walk. When she was not working in her own garden she was helping Ray in hers and, as more was expected of her in the house since the summer holidays had begun, she had few idle moments.

CHAPTER XII

TILDA DECIDES

KATHLEEN was sentimental ; there isn't the least doubt of it ; most girls are at sixteen, for it is the time of life when dreams come unbidden. Tilda, though she teased Kathleen for mooning over poetry, and poked fun at Ray for her zeal in gardening, was much impressed, nevertheless, by the accounts of the Council Fire, and began to realize that whatever else the Camp-Fire Girls meant to be, they certainly were ardent advocates of outdoor life. Indeed, as the summer advanced, they seemed to think of little else than open air sports and every meeting was held in the open. Sometimes it was no further off than the Hoveys' back lot. Sometimes it was as far as the mountain top. Again it might be in the meadow at the foot of the mountain, but wherever it was there was always a good time to report to Tilda who still held off. But finally she, too, fell into line. Her decision was rather sudden and was brought about through that long harbored scheme of "getting even with the boys."

It was Kathleen who made an announcement which started Tilda's keen desire to be present at a certain meeting. The two girls encountered one another on the steps of Cyrus Prince's store. "You're going to miss it," said Kathleen gaily. "Old Dilly-dally, you should have made up your mind long ago and then you could have come with us to-morrow. Where do you think we are going to have our meeting?"

"Can't guess. On top of the Blacks' barn, or in the Knowles's chicken house, possibly," returned Tilda.

"Goose, stop jeering. I've half a mind not to tell you. Promise not to breathe it to a soul if I do tell?"

"Cross my heart."

"We're going to the pool."

"No. Really? What about the lowing kine?"

"That's the joy of it. Wait till you hear and you will be surprised. They are to be kept out of the way, in another field, for our special benefit."

"Who said so? That grouchy old fellow that they say owns the place?"

"Grouchy old fellow, that's good," Kathleen laughed. "My dear, Mr. Furnival owns that place. The man who looks after it is but a hireling." Kathleen paused to note Tilda's exclamation of astonishment. "I knew you'd be surprised," she went on. "Isn't it a good joke? Mr. Furnival says we can go there as often as

we want to. Of course it is Mrs. Furnival who spoke to her husband about it. Not only can we go, but the cows are to be hustled out of the way on our day. All we have to do is to let Mrs. Furnival know the evening before and she will see that Grouchy attends to it. Won't he hate it just?"

"Well of all things!" cried Tilda. "After all, to think you can have the best right. Of course the boys climb the fence and take possession, and no one interferes very much; old Grouchy scolds a little sometimes, but it is you girls who will really have an absolute claim. Isn't it a joke? Do you think Miss Bolton would let me come in on a hasty notice?" she questioned. "I really can't miss this, Kathleen, and you know I have been giving attention to what you all are doing, so it isn't as if I made a sudden leap and landed in your midst. I don't believe in taking hold of a thing you can't carry out. Do you think Miss Bolton would accept such a flyaway as I am?"

"I am very sure she will be glad to welcome you. You're all right, I'm sure you are."

"Then before my ardor cools I'm going right over to see Miss Bolton and tell her. Oh, Kathleen, if only we could manage it so the boys would be there the same day, it would be such fun to flout them. They have been meaner than ever lately, so snippy and

snickery over what they call their secret haunt. What joy to show them that it isn't secret and that we have the best right there. What joy to say *we*, by the way."

"The boys were very good to me when they gathered all those strawberries," remarked Kathleen.

"Oh, well, we don't intend to turn and rend them in pieces like raging lionesses; we just want to flaunt them and call them down from their lofty perch. They make me tired with their lords of creation manner, just as if girls couldn't do anything but squeal at the sight of mice, walk mincingly and talk in little falsetto voices. You'd suppose to see Sig, and all the rest when they imitate us, that we weren't up to anything worth while. That is one reason why I avoid household things and take to the open. The Hoveys don't understand because they have no brother, but you can for you have a cousin. So long, Kath! I'm glad enough that you told me. I am going straight over to throw myself at Miss Bolton's feet."

After she had talked over matters with Miss Bolton and had received every encouragement from her, Tilda returned home to find a group of boys gathered on the back porch. "What are you all doing?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing, just kidding," the reply came from Billy Bodine. "What have you been doing?"

"I? Oh, I've been to tell Miss Bolton that I want

to join the Camp-Fire Girls. They have a Council Fire to-morrow and if I don't go in then I shall have to wait a whole month. The girls told me they were going to have a specially good meeting with lots of jolly things to eat. Kathleen and Ray take their first rank and I don't want to miss it."

"What are they going to do? Play at scalping one another? I saw an old hatchet out in the wood-house this morning; you might take it for a tomahawk," suggested Sig.

Tilda made a scornful mouth at him but vouchsafed no reply.

"I suppose they will have mock Indian pudding, and it will be a mock Indian meal," said Billy Bodine facetiously.

"I think you are horrid," declared Tilda. "You are just jealous because you are left out."

"I reckon you girls aren't the only ones who can go on a tramp and have picnics and things. We know a thing or two, don't we, Sig?" Walter Northrup nudged his friend. "I'll bet you will have to lug water, goodness knows how far, and that you won't have any better eats than we do. What about that last supper, Sig?"

"Yum-yum," replied Sig. "Wish I had it before me now."

"What did you have?" inquired Tilda with interest.

"Beefsteak, roast potatoes and pie," responded Walter. "Where are you going to have your picnic?"

"Don't call it by such a commonplace name. Our 'Council Fire' you must say. We shall hold it somewhere on the mountain. I hope it will be within reach of water; I do so love to paddle and sometimes wish I were a fish. I have chosen a beaver for my symbol because he is so industrious."

"That's good," laughed Billy Bodine. "When did you turn industrious?"

"I've always been industrious," returned Tilda with dignity. "I may not cook and sew and do certain things which you consider necessary for a mark of industriousness, but then you don't do them either, and yet you would be much aggrieved if you were called lazy."

"That may be, but ——" Billy rose to the argument.

"Oh, come off," cried Walter. "What's the use of arguing, Billy? You know Tilda and you never stop if you once begin. What's the Indian name for beaver, Tilda?"

"I suppose it is different in different tribes, but the name I have chosen is Ahmuk. I love the way the beavers paddle around in the water and build dams.

I'd love to build a dam. If Aunt Emily ever invites me to go to Maine with her again, I hope it will be some place where I can learn to swim and row and do all those watery things. As I said before, I hope there will be at least a brook where we are going to-morrow."

Walter snickered. "We've got the dead wood on you, for our haunt has a dandy pond."

"I think you might tell me where it is," returned Tilda in an aggrieved voice.

"Yes, and have you girls monopolize it. No, sir. Don't you do it, Walt." Sig spoke with emphasis. "We want a place where you all won't come tagging us, and where we won't be disturbed by screams if you see a snake or a cow on the horizon."

"It would have to be a pretty big snake to be seen on the horizon, wouldn't it?" said Tilda sweetly; "a regular boa constrictor; but as for cows, they might be seen. Are there cows anywhere near your pond?" she asked innocently.

Walter laughed. "Are there, Sig?"

Sig joined the laugh. "Maybe we don't tell; it might make it too dead easy for you to find the place."

"I don't mind those little green grass-snakes," Tilda went on trying hard to appear unconcerned. "I think

they are rather nice little things, but cows, a whole lot of cows might really be dangerous. What would you boys do, for instance, if a whole herd of, say twenty cows or more, should come charging down upon you?"

"Take a stick and drive them off!" returned Billy promptly.

"The whole twenty? How brave you must be." Tilda spoke with a fine irony which was lost upon the boys. "We girls must certainly try to avoid cows," she added with an air of timidity. "If there are any frequenting your preserves you may be sure we would not intrude upon your privacy if we could."

"You don't know where it is, so we're not afraid," responded Sig with an assured air. And Tilda, laughing in her sleeve, went off to retail the conversation to Kathleen and the Hovey girls.

If there had been any real reason why the boys should not have shared their knowledge of the pretty pool with the girls, it is probable that Miss Bolton would not have consented to hold the Council Fire on its borders, but, as it was, she considered that they had a more legitimate right to the spot as it was Mrs. Furnival herself who first suggested that they should go there. She had discovered it to be very lovely, and her interest in the Camp-Fire Girls was so great that she lost no opportunity of helping and encouraging

them in any way that she could, so they went blithely forth and entered upon the scene by an easier route than that which Kathleen and Tilda had taken.

The girls were busy making preparations for supper, Kathleen and Ray feeling rather serious, for this evening they were to be welcomed as Wood Gatherers, and Tilda would present her first claim for honors, when suddenly footsteps crashing through the underbrush were heard. Then voices sounded from above, and presently, running, leaping, scrambling down the bank came half a dozen boys.

"Old Grouch must be burning brush," the girls heard some one say.

Tilda looked at Kathleen and giggled. Then the boys, filing along the winding path which led around the pond, caught sight of the circle of girls, Miss Bolton in their midst, seated around the fire. If it had been a veritable camp of Indians it could not have caused greater astonishment. The boys stood stock still. First they stared, then they frowned. The girls chuckled, and the boys, looking very glum, took up their line of march to the opposite side of the pond.

"They looked real peevish," remarked Tilda, at which a shout of laughter went up which in no wise soothed the feelings of the silent group opposite, nor when the girls rose to their feet and with common con-

sent broke forth into singing: "Better run away, better run away," did it tend toward creating serenity.

"Now, girls, that was adding insult to injury," said Miss Bolton as the last strains died away. "Why did you have to sing 'Boo-ga-man'?"

"It came in so appropriately," Kathleen answered. "Dear Sebowisha, we could not resist."

"I can't say that I blame you so very much," returned Miss Bolton laughing.

The girls skurried around to unpack the various articles they had brought. Ray and Adelaide were dispatched to get the milk which they intended to use for cocoa, Margaret set the chickens to broil before the fire, Miss Bolton looked into the matter of supplies. "I don't believe we shall need cake and doughnuts, too," she decided. "Probably the boys would enjoy these nice fresh doughnuts. What do you say to sending them over to them with our compliments?"

"Just the thing," was the unanimous decision.

"Who will take them?" asked Miss Bolton.

"Oh, we will; Kathleen and I would love to do it," Tilda offered. "I forgot, I must say Thurénsera will take them, Sebowisha, and I will go with her."

"I can see you are perishing to do it," responded Miss Bolton with a laugh, "so go along."

Carrying the doughnuts piled upon two paper plates,

the girls skirted the pond and came upon the boys preparing to cook their supper over the fire they had just kindled. They appeared rather subdued and did not greet the girls with any enthusiasm.

"Ohuanuáh-Nah Camp-Fire sends its compliments and begs that you will accept this slight offering of good-will," said Kathleen extending her plate.

The boys looked from the heaped-up plates to the girls, wondering if here could be a joke, but seeing only a pleasant gravity upon the faces of the messengers their own countenances relaxed and Billy Bodine so far unbent as to say, "My, but those look good."

But as no one made a movement toward taking the plates the girls set them down on a flat rock and turned to go.

Feeling that this was rather ungracious acceptance of a well-intentioned gift Sig spoke up: "I'm sure we're very much obliged, aren't we, boys?"

Reminded that they were lacking in politeness the boys hastened to repeat: "Sure, we're very much obliged."

"I'm sure you are very welcome," returned Kathleen formally, as the two girls continued their way.

But they were not allowed to depart without further words from the boys who were beginning to feel rather ashamed of themselves. "I say, girls," Sig sang out, "what are you going to have for supper?"

"Soup, broiled chicken, tomato salad, potato chips, toasted crackers, cocoa and cake," Tilda told him.

"Whew! that sounds fine," returned Sig.

"What are you going to have?" asked Kathleen.

"We haven't anything but chops and potatoes. We were going to have coffee, but we forgot to bring any milk."

"I shouldn't wonder if we could let you have some milk," said Kathleen. "Mrs. Furnival said we could get all we wanted from the farmhouse."

"Mrs. Furnival?" cried Sig. "Mrs. Furnival?" echoed all the other boys.

"Why, yes," replied Tilda innocently. "It was she who suggested our coming here. The place belongs to the Furnivals, you know, and Mrs. Furnival said we could come whenever we chose and that she would see that the cows were pastured in another field when we girls were here. She told us to go to the house and get all the milk we wanted, too."

"How did you know there were cows?" spoke up Billy Bodine suspiciously.

Tilda laughed. "We saw them that day when we met you all coming up as we were going down."

"Then all this time you have known just where the place was?"

"Oh, yes," returned Tilda sweetly.

"Well, all I've got to say is that you are a sly minx," spoke up Sig wrathfully.

Tilda paid no attention to this outburst, but went on to say, "Of course you boys know you are trespassing, but if you are arrested for it we will try to get Mr. Furnival to let you off, if you will promise not to do it again."

"You've got us," cried Billy. "We throw up our hands, Tilda. You can have us all, including our boots. If you haven't played the neatest game I'm a lobster." He threw back his head and gave forth a whoop. His sense of humor deprived him of all resentment, and the rest of the boys, seeing how he took it, swung themselves around to the same point of view and laughed uproariously.

"Wohelo, Wohelo," came the cheer from the opposite bank.

"Oh, we must go. Our supper is ready," cried Kathleen.

This time the boys let them depart. Whatever chagrin they may have felt at first, it was lost in the enjoyment of the joke and the doughnuts, while the smoke of the two camp-fires uniting drifted off as one cloud when the sun went down.

CHAPTER XIII

NEW SONGS

FOLLOWING the meeting by the pond there was a period of tranquillity. The boys appeared quite subdued and the girls went their several ways without giving much thought to their own triumph. Once in a while Tilda would make some teasing remark to her brother and his friends, and these speeches were taken more to heart than she realized. Among themselves the boys whispered of revenge, but the days went by and nothing was done, for they could not invent anything forcible enough to offset their defeat.

The tomatoes had flourished amazingly and furnished Kathleen with a good supply to can. Moreover, she made an arrangement with the Eckerts to do some preserving and canning for them in exchange for fresh vegetables from their garden. Mrs. Wyatt looked askance at this use of time and fuel, and remarked that she didn't see where the benefit came in to her or her family, as all the money Kathleen made was turned over to her everlasting Camp-Fire or was spent

on something she wanted for her dress, and if this sort of thing was going to keep up she didn't know but Kathleen would be better off staying at home and helping her. So, after one or two attempts Kathleen was fain to take her materials over to the Hoveys' or the Eckerts', both ready enough to give her a chance to do her work.

"If you do the canning I don't see that it is any more than fair that we furnish the rest," said Mrs. Eckert amiably, "and besides it is more convenient, for you won't have to lug the stuff all over to your house and back again." As for the Hoveys, they were always ready to stand in the breach, realizing that Kathleen was having a pretty hard time of it.

"I don't know what I should do if I had such a family," Tilda expressed her opinion to Ray; "they are so mean."

"I don't think it is Mrs. Wyatt so much as her husband," said Ray. "Mother says Mrs. Wyatt didn't use to be like that, but she has fallen into his ways, and Jimmy isn't stingy at all. I suppose they really have more of an income than we have, but you would never think it."

"I don't suppose Kathleen is an angel herself," Tilda went on, after a moment's thought, "but who is? I am not, I know."

"I think the Camp-Fire is doing a lot for her," said Ray.

"It certainly is," returned Tilda heartily. "It is doing a lot for all of us, your humble servant as well as the rest. Speaking of angels, there comes Kath now."

"I've been hunting everywhere for you, Tilda," said Kathleen as she came upon the two sitting upon the Hoveys' back porch. "I have an idea, girls. Don't you think it would be fine if we could write some Camp-Fire songs for ourselves?"

"Oh, dear me, how very ambitious," cried Ray. "I could no more write a song than I could fly."

"You could, Tilda," Kathleen turned to the latter.

"I don't know. I'm about like the man who was asked if he could play the violin and who said he didn't know for he had never tried."

"This is quite a different proposition," said Kathleen laughing. "All you have to do is to pick out some familiar tune and write words that can be sung to it."

"Hear the child!" exclaimed Ray. "You would suppose she was giving a rule for a pudding."

"Well, it is really easy." Kathleen defended her position.

"Have you tried, may I ask?" questioned Tilda.

"Well, yes, after a fashion. I didn't write anything

that would do, but I think I could if I set my mind to it. I thought it would be more fun if we were to try it together."

"Excuse me," said Ray. "I have never been visited by the Muse and never shall be. I can't even write a limerick, for I have tried to do that much. My ear doesn't seem to be attuned to rhymes. You two go along and try what you can do. Leave me to more material things."

"Come along then, Tilda," said Kathleen.

"Where?"

"Oh, any place where we shall not be molested for the next half or three-quarters of an hour, which is all the time allowed me."

"Then let us hie to our attic."

The Eckerts' attic was a spot where the girls often took refuge when they wanted to be absolutely undisturbed. Once in a while the boys found them out, but they generally took the precaution to bolt the door and unless an onslaught was made from the outside they were quite safe from intrusion.

"I have paper and pencils," Kathleen announced as they climbed the steep stair to the big roomy space in which various odds and ends were tucked away. "I'll sit on the trunk, Tilda, and you take the stool. There, that is fine. Now, what tune are you going to take?"

"Oh, dear, I don't know. I shall have to think about it. What are you?"

"I thought I would take 'The Old Gray Bonnet.' Every one knows that tune, and it is a catchy one."

"It would be too much for my powers," declared Tilda. "I'll try something easier." She sat pensively looking out the small window while Kathleen began scribbling. In a few minutes the scribbling was interrupted by Tilda's exclaiming, "Oh, I know, I will write a rainy day song to the tune of 'Tramp, tramp, tramp.'"

"Fine," agreed Kathleen. "I knew you would strike it. You always do come out ahead, Tilda, if you but put your mind to a thing. When you don't come out it is because you haven't put your mind to it. A rainy day song is just the thing we haven't and, after that last tramp when we came home soaked, we surely do need it. My, how disgusted Auntie was, and as for Uncle, his scorn was too great for words, though, goodness knows, looks were quite expressive enough."

"We certainly were a bedraggled lot," agreed Tilda, "but my, what fun it was. How did you begin your song, Kath?" Tilda looked over her friend's shoulder.

"This way, you see. I wrote down the words of 'The Old Gray Bonnet' and just followed the—the rhythm."

"Then I'll do that way," Tilda decided.

For some time the pencils flew and then there was a

pause on the part of Tilda. "I can't think of anything that rhymes with woes but nose," she announced, "at least anything that will do as well."

"Why not rose?"

"It doesn't suit my thought." Tilda shook her head.

"Then why not nose?"

"It isn't poetical, but then I suppose we are not trying to be poets, are we?"

"No, we are merely trying to write something that will be suitable for us to sing when we are coming home from our tramps."

They scribbled away, erased, crossed out, hummed softly to themselves for a while longer then Kathleen suddenly declared that she had come to the end of her inspiration and would do no more.

"Read it," Tilda urged.

"Oh, I don't like to! I'm ashamed."

"Piffle! Likewise bosh!" exclaimed Tilda. "If it isn't good enough for me to hear how do you expect it to be good enough for us all to sing? Go on, you silly thing. I'm not handing out honors or marks or anything. Go on. I will not write another word till you do."

This insistence finally brought Kathleen to the point of consent. "I want you to tell me exactly how it strikes you," she said. "Promise."

"I promise, if you will do the same for me."

"Very well, then listen :

A CAMP-FIRE SONG

Tune : " The Old Gray Bonnet."

In a circle round the fire,
While the flames are mounting higher,
Sit the Brightwood girls, one and all,
Sebowisna as their leader,
May they always hear and heed her
When her loving counsels fall.
The fagots burn so brightly,
The moments pass so lightly
In story, song and game,
That each Camp-Fire Girl remembers,
Though she covers up the embers,
Her happy Camp-Fire's flame.

Chorus : Then bring along your light wood,
For we're the girls of Brightwood,
Ohuanuáh-Nah is our name ;
To our watchword, Wohelo,
We'll be loving and leal ; O,
There's joy in our Camp-Fire's flame."

"Why, Kath, I think that's great," cried Tilda admiringly. "I didn't think you would do half so well. I don't believe any of the others could."

"I feel sure yours is better."

"It isn't. No, it isn't. It is so very commonplace. Just wait till I finish this last part and you shall hear

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it. Let me see, fair—air. Yes, I've got it. One minute. There! Here goes:

A RAINY DAY SONG

Tune: "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching."

Down the muddy road we tramp,
As we're coming home from camp
With the raindrops trickling down each little
nose,
But we're feeling no despair,
For we love the open air,
And no one's telling any one her woes.

Chorus: Tramp, tramp, tramp, the girls are marching,
Cheer, cheer, Wohelo is our cry,
And beside our fire's blaze
We'll not mind the rainy days,
Nor the clouds that sometimes gather in the
sky.

We are getting very wet,
But we will not fume and fret,
For every girl among us likes the fun.
Though we're wet quite to the skin,
We would not tarry in,
For the rain's as great a blessing as the sun.
(*Chorus.*)

The road is made for all,
In the winter, spring and fall,
When it's rainy, when it's snowy, when it's fair,
So, no matter when we go,
It is right, we'll have you know,
For there's nothing half so good for us as air."
(*Chorus.*)

"Why, Tilda, you smart thing, you really have done finely," cried Kathleen. "It is better than mine, of course it is. Don't be so modest. There is more purpose to it, I don't know just what,—more swing. Miss Bolton will be so pleased, I know she will."

"I think it might do pretty well," Tilda acknowledged, "if I could have gotten rid of the nose, but that spoils it to my thinking, and I simply cannot write it over; all my fire is consumed, put out by the rain, as it were."

"The next thing is to copy them and show them to Miss Bolton, and then when we go tramping again we can sing them." Kathleen looked affectionately at the paper she held. "Aunt Sue will be looking for me. If I can come over again this afternoon maybe we can finish them up."

"We may as well leave them here," Tilda suggested, "and then we will not have the bother of looking up paper and things."

To this Kathleen agreed, and the two girls left the attic.

But no sooner had they disappeared than a head, which had bobbed up more than once at the window behind them, was followed by shoulders and then by legs which it was now apparent belonged to Sig. As the boy stepped into the attic he stopped and furtively

listened, then he tiptoed across the floor to the corner where the girls had been sitting. He picked up the papers on which they had been writing, glanced over them, chuckling, and finally thrust them into his pocket. Then he stole back again and left the place by the window through which he had entered.

A voice at the foot of the ladder which stood against the house inquired hoarsely, "Find anything?"

"You bet," was the answer. "Come on to the barn and I will show you."

"We'd better take the ladder away or they may spot us." It was Billy Bodine who spoke.

"Bring it along, you two," Sig gave the word as he raced off leaving his chums to follow.

The three boys established themselves comfortably on the hay and Sig drew forth his prize. "Songs," he said. "They've been writing them."

The other two laughed and hugged their knees as they sat expectantly.

"I'm glad it was just Kathleen and Tilda," said Billy, "for they were the ones who first ferreted out the way to the pond, and they are the ones we want to get even with. I don't care about any of the other girls, for they weren't in it."

"That's just what I thought," Sig agreed, "and that is why I have been on the watch to catch them in

some way. This is pretty bad scribbling, but I reckon I can make it out. You see I was listening when they didn't know it, and I had a notion what they were up to. I heard them say they were coming back to copy the things they wrote so I struck while the iron was hot."

"Won't they be a surprised pair when they miss them?" laughed Walter.

It was a surprised pair who sought the attic that afternoon and found their papers gone. "What in the world could have become of them?" said Tilda after vainly searching around. "I locked the door myself, and took the key. I thought maybe Sig might have come up for something, but he couldn't have for I have had the key all the time. I told mother I had so she could get it if she wanted."

"The wind could not have blown them away," suggested Kathleen.

"No, for we didn't leave a window open."

"Well, they couldn't go without somebody or something to take them, but gone they are."

"I think it is a mean, horrid shame," cried Tilda. "After all our work, and yours was so good."

"Yours was, you mean. Well, all we can do is to try to write them over again."

"Not this child. I could never remember mine and

I haven't the vim to try a second time. You can, if you choose."

"Well, I will wait and see if they turn up, and in the meantime I will try to recall as much as I can, but it certainly does take the wind out of our sails, and besides it is so very mysterious to have anything spirited away in that uncanny way."

"I could almost suspect Sig if I hadn't had the key," said Tilda thoughtfully. "The boys have been lying low for some time, but I am sure they have been plotting against you and me in particular, for our part in that affair of the camping ground."

"But they couldn't crawl through a keyhole," protested Kathleen.

"Well, there is no use in surmising; it will not bring back our lost efforts," sighed Tilda, and after a last search the two dejected girls left the attic.

It was not until that night when each was safely tucked away in bed that the mystery was solved. First Kathleen was roused from her first nap by hearing singing. At first she thought she must be dreaming and that the strains of "The Old Gray Bonnet" had so impressed themselves that she still heard them in her sleep. But no, she was wide awake and some one was really singing beneath her window. She sat up and listened, then settled down again believing it to be

merely a coincidence, but presently the tune changed and now it was "Tramp, tramp, tramp" that she heard. Surely there was method in this madness. She arose and crept softly to the window to look below and see three boys lustily shouting out :

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are coming,
Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! they're laughing loud.
You can look for further fun,
For they've only just begun,
And you needn't think that you can fool the crowd."

Kathleen stole back to bed again, and presently the voices ceased, then she fell asleep wondering how in the world the boys had managed to steal the verses.

As for Tilda, she, too, was awakened a little later, and although she wondered, her mind seized the main fact that the boys had possessed themselves of the verses and the thing she must do was to outwit them if she could. So up she arose, remade her bed, and then cautiously slipped out of the room and across to an empty spare room on the other side of the house where she calmly established herself for the night. At the breakfast table her mother said, "I wonder what that singing was last night. Did you hear it, Tilda ? It seemed to come from your side of the house."

"I took a notion to sleep in the spare room last night," returned Tilda. "I thought I would sleep

better there; sometimes it is quite noisy on my side. What was the singing?"

"It sounded close by and it kept up for quite a while."

"When people are coming home from a picnic they often sing as they go by," returned Tilda nonchalantly.

"What time did you hear them?"

"About eleven o'clock, I should say."

"They kept late hours, didn't they?" Tilda responded and went on with her breakfast in a perfectly unconcerned manner.

Sig shot her a keen glance, but she did not so much as turn her head his way.

However, the boys knew that Kathleen had heard and would probably tell, and had to be satisfied with that. The girls laughed over the affair, but never once did they give the boys the satisfaction of knowing that they noticed their prank. Kathleen rewrote her verses and finally persuaded Tilda to do the same, and one day, a week later, the papers were discovered in the very spot where they had originally left them. Of course they knew very well who had returned them, but how they were first purloined to this day they have not found out.

CHAPTER XIV

KATHLEEN GOES TO TOWN

FROM the tomato vines had been gathered the last tomato, and Jimmy's corn stalks had been turned into fodder when the October Council Fire took place. This was to be an unusually great occasion, for the Muskoday Camp was to join the Ohuanuáh-Nah in this ceremonial meeting, and good times were expected. The girls of the village were naturally in a higher state of excitement than their sisters of the city, to whom even a Grand Council was no great rarity, and it was talked of early and late. Tilda, at the eleventh hour, redoubled her efforts at winning honors, and surprised every one by announcing that she was ready for the rank of Wood Gatherer.

"Why, Tilda, last week you told me that you hadn't more than half enough honors out of the ten required," said Ray.

"That didn't mean that I wouldn't have them," returned Tilda coolly.

"But how did you earn them so soon?"

"Boiled, fried, scrambled, and baked eggs," Tilda

began to check off on her fingers ; "prepared four salads ; did the marketing for the week for so much ; had a party of ten giving refreshments not costing more than a dollar ; identified and described ten butterflies ; that's five and is all I needed."

"Well, you certainly picked out dead easy things," returned Ray.

"Of course I did," replied Tilda. "What was the use of picking out the hard ones?"

"Oh, for the sake of feeling that you have really accomplished something difficult ; it gives one a comfortable sort of feeling, you know."

"It doesn't give me a comfortable feeling," replied Tilda with a laugh. "I'm doing the things I like to do. I don't care a rap for the rest. Let those do them who care for them ; I am sure there are enough to go around."

Take it all in all the next was the very jolliest meeting of the season, and so, too, the Muskodays decided. The "eats" were unusually good, the programme specially entertaining, and the presence of a larger company heightened the pleasure.

The two songs which Kathleen and Tilda had written were received with acclamations, and were sung vigorously in spite of the fact that there was not a cloud in the sky.

The girls of the Muskoday Camp-Fire were enthusiastic in their praises of the lovely camp ground, and enjoyed it the more after Tilda had given them an account of the encounter with the boys.

"They'll not be here this time," Tilda declared, "for they know better. They have tried to get even with us, and I suppose we shall be challenging one another world without end, for Kathleen and I aren't going to take any nonsense."

"I don't blame you," returned Judy to whom she was talking. "Besides it is rather spicy to have a contest like that going on; it keeps your wits alive."

"They are really nice boys," Kathleen assured her, "and we are good friends in spite of this rivalry."

"Come, come, girls, we are ready to light the fire and form the procession," called Sadie Wallace. "You have talked there long enough." And so the girls scrambled to their feet and followed Sadie to the woodsy path from which presently should wind the procession with stately step.

Kathleen and Ray had felt quite exalted after the ceremony which admitted them to the rank of Wood Gatherer, but Tilda did not take it so seriously, and was so full of quips and jokes as to keep every one in good spirits.

"What a merry wight she is," said Judy to Kathleen as the two stood watching Tilda dance a regular hoe-down. "Is she always like this?"

"Almost always, in a crowd."

"It seems to me you are not as gay as usual," remarked Judy looking sharply at her companion, "and besides I don't like your looks."

"Sorry," returned Kathleen with a smile. "How can I alter them? Would you like a turned up nose, for instance? I might dye my hair an inky black or a peroxide yellow, if that would suit you."

"Nonsense, you know that is not what I mean. You are looking pale and have lost flesh."

"I always do, in summer. I think I feel the heat more than most persons."

"Then you shouldn't stay here; you should go up to Maine."

"Why don't you tell me I should spend the summer in Mars, or some other distant planet? It would be about as easy for me to get there."

"Oh, me, but I do wish you could go. It would be the making of you. There is one thing you are going to do, though, you are going home with me to spend the day to-morrow. No, no, there is no use in your saying you are not, for you are. I have it all planned out, and if you say a word you will be picked up bodily,

bound hand and foot, gagged and carried off willy-nilly. I am to spend the night at the Furnivals'. To-morrow we come for you in the motor car right after breakfast. In the evening you come back with the Furnivals, unless you will stay on."

It was an alluring prospect and quite dazzled Kathleen, but she still had a word of protest. "It sounds perfectly delightful, Judy dear, but what do you suppose Auntie and Uncle will say?"

"They will say yes, of course. You don't know me, my child. Once I get a notion into my head I am the most obstinate and perverse creature you ever saw. I wish you could have seen how I managed mother and father when I determined I wanted to be a Camp-Fire Girl. This time I shall press Mrs. Furnival into my service and what I can't do, she can. You are not in it at all, except so far as saying that you really won't dislike to come, and that you will be ready by nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

Waving her hand gaily Judy went off to seek Miss Keene with whom Kathleen saw her in close conversation for some time, and that very evening appeared the Furnivals' motor car before the Wyatts' house. Judy and Mrs. Furnival were promptly ushered into the ugly parlor, which seemed to Kathleen to look worse in summer than in winter, and the two visitors went

straight to the object of their mission. Kathleen was peremptorily, but laughingly ordered by Judy to make herself scarce, as she wasn't wanted, and so she went out to keep company with the corn and tomatoes in the moonlight till she heard Judy calling her : " Sister, where are you ? Sister, where are you ? "

Kathleen came out of the shadowy garden to answer : " Here I am. "

" It's all settled, " said Judy ; " you are coming, and we'll call for you about nine. Don't dress up, for we are going in the motor car and you will want something on your head that won't blow to pieces. You'd better take a wrap, too, for it may be cool coming back. Good-night. Mrs. Furnival is waiting. " She ran off leaving Kathleen wondering how so much could have been accomplished in so short a time.

" So you're getting very thick with the Furnivals, " her uncle's words greeted her as she went in. He spoke jocosely but Kathleen wished he were not so evidently pleased.

" It isn't the Furnivals, it's Judy Falkner, " she replied.

" Well, it's all of a piece, " returned her uncle.

Kathleen made her escape without making further remark. She spent some time in deciding what she should wear, but finally decided upon her simplest

white frock. She would take her blue jacket and wear the hat trimmed with the corn-flowers.

What usually seemed a long and tiresome trip was of no length at all for the automobile whizzed them to the city in an incredibly short space of time, and before she could realize it she was following Judy up the stairs to the most charming room Kathleen had ever seen. She could scarcely restrain a long drawn "Oh!" as they entered. The furniture and walls were of a soft warm gray; the summer rug upon the floor was of gray and pink; the airy draperies at the windows and dressing table were of a rose pattern on a white ground, and the same design was carried out in the bed spread and table cover. A queer Japanese bowl of pink roses completed the scheme of decoration. A few choice water colors were on the walls, and there were several things suggestive of the Camp-Fire in the room.

"How do you like it?" asked Judy gaily.

"I never saw anything so lovely. I can't quite see why it is." She looked at the gray furniture and walls. "I think it must be the roses."

"I am so glad you think it is pretty, for it was my own idea to have it like this. I was tired of white furniture, and I can't bear a brass bedstead and heavy mahogany for a girl's room. I wanted it simple but

cheerful and so I had the furniture made to order and the rest was easy enough."

Easy enough for Judy, thought Kathleen, but she made a mental note of it all.

"Most of the pictures are scenes of our various camping places. That is Muskoday, as I call it, the meadow where we had our first ceremonial meeting, and that is a bit of the lake up in Maine where we were last summer. Oh, I must show you my Record Book and my photographs. I am so glad we have a whole day before us, for we can have such a good time talking."

"Did you paint the pictures?" Kathleen asked, believing that Judy could do most anything.

"Oh, dear no; one of our Camp-Fire Girls did them and I got them from her. You be looking over these photographs while I get my Record Book. I prize it so highly that I don't leave it lying about for the maids to handle. I think all the photographs are marked on the back so you can tell what they are." She went across the room to unlock her desk and take from it the Record Book while Kathleen absorbed herself in the photographs. Groups of girls in Camp-Fire dress, girls in canoes, in bathing suits, seated in a circle around a camp-fire, stretches of lake, views of distant hills, misty lines of mountains, rocky coasts and sandy beaches were all represented.

"What lovely souvenirs to have," said Kathleen, looking up as Judy seated herself by her side. "I hope we can have some photographs of our meetings. Tilda said she would borrow Sig's camera some time, so perhaps we may be able to get some good snap shots."

"You should have a Record Book ; that is best of all. I simply adore mine, for in it I keep track of my honors and all our doings. See, these are the fifty-two phases of the moon where I can mark down my attendance each week, and this is for elective honors, and those pages I fill with ranks, honors and all sorts of things. Then the blank pages I use for accounts of the meetings, for photographs and so on. I must write down our count of yesterday's Council Fire while it is fresh in my mind."

"So must I, though my journal is a very poor affair compared to yours. I don't suppose I shall ever go beyond the mountain, and all these wonderful feats of swimming and rowing and diving that you can record must be left out of mine."

Judy closed the book and put her arm around Kathleen. "You don't know about that, old girl. I think it is a good thing not to have used up all one's possibilities. I know some girls who have been everywhere, seen everything they care to see and have done about everything they care to do, so they are so blasé and

tired of existence there is no joy left for them. It seems to me that it is much better to have longings unfulfilled than fulfilled, at least when one is as young as we are. I speak from experience, for I was fast falling into the bog of discontent myself, as I told you. Now, you see, if you have so much to look forward to you will not outgrow your enthusiasms, and when things do come along you will enjoy them twice as much for having had to wait for them."

"There is something in that," Kathleen acknowledged. "I am learning many new ways to look at life. Miss Bolton started me on the right tack and every little while I get a fresh outlook. Still, Judy, dear, I must say that I would like the chance of broadening my limits a little further. I can't do as I choose, as you can, you know."

"Bless you, child, you mustn't suppose that I can do exactly as I choose. My beloved parents are eager for me to be happy, but they insist that I shall be happy in their way, and I can't. It is just beginning to dawn upon them that I have ambitions and desires outside theirs. They give permission under protest."

"Oh, don't you hate that?" cried Kathleen. "That is just the way it is always given me."

"I pin them down to facts; it is the only way," returned Judy. "I say that if they can show me where

a thing is really wrong I will give it up, but when mamma says that Mrs. So-and-so's daughter doesn't do it I maintain that is no reason why I shouldn't. When father says it is not the thing for a girl in my position, I ask him what my position is, and why I am not good enough to be better, and so we have it back and forth."

"I didn't realize that you had battles, too," confessed Kathleen. "I have always felt that you were the most favored mortal in the world."

"So I am, in many ways. I acknowledge that I am more blessed than you, for example, or than Sadie Wallace, but still I do have my trials. If instead of my doting parents I had an uncle and aunt like yours, Kathleen."

"If it were not for their kindness I should be in the orphan asylum," said Kathleen soberly.

"Don't," cried Judy sharply. "I can't bear to have you suggest such a thing. They would never have been so cruel."

"No, you see that is just it; they were not so cruel, and that is why I am trying to be very grateful to them. I don't feel that they love me very much, but I realize that they are trying to do their duty by me, and I am thankful that I have a home in their house."

Judy hugged Kathleen closer, and the two sat silent

for a few minutes, then Judy spoke. "You know, Kathleen, dear, I am that unfortunate thing, an only child. There was a little sister two years younger than I, but she died when she was a baby. You don't know how I have always longed and mourned for that little sister. I used to long for her so that it actually hurt. When I joined the Camp-Fire Girls, for the first time in my life I felt that I had sisters, a whole company of them, who had the same standards and interests that I had. Every Camp-Fire Girl is a sister, and they are very dear to me. But you, Kathleen, who have no sister either, seem somehow nearer than the rest. I don't know why it is, but I feel that I can say things to you that I can to no one else, and that you will understand, and so I want you to feel the same way with me."

"Oh, Judy, do you know I have said to myself so many times: if Judy would let me, I could tell her anything, and I know she would never misunderstand."

"How lovely," cried Judy. "It was a mutual thing, then. It is just as Emerson says: 'Friends are self-elected.' We will make this compact, that we will share one another's joys and sorrows and help one another in every way we can without any false feeling of pride. Dear sister Thurénsera, will you promise?"

"I promise, sister Iwaterusch," was the answer.

Judy went to her dressing bureau and began to rummage in a carved box which stood upon it. Presently she came back, sat down by Kathleen's side, took her hand and slipped a ring upon it. "There," she exclaimed, "that seals the compact. You are to wear this ring as a token of our undying friendship and of my love."

"You don't mean it's mine to keep? Oh, Judy!"

"Why not? It's a simple little ring, only one not very big sapphire, but blue is true, you know, and it represents our loyal friendship."

"Oh, but Judy, I shouldn't take such a valuable present."

Judy laughed. "You persistent protestor! It isn't very valuable, and I have more rings than I shall ever wear. Do please me by keeping this one."

Kathleen looked down at the hand which wore the ring. "I just love it. It is so precious coming from you. I can wear it on one hand and my Wood Gatherer ring on the other. Think how much they both suggest. If only I had something to give you in return."

"We can soon settle that," returned Judy laughingly bringing over the box from which she had taken the ring. "Look through these and tell me what you would prefer that I should wear as a token from you.

When you decide I'll give the thing to you and it will be your very own, then you can give it back to me as a free and fair exchange."

Judy was so joyous over the plan that Kathleen could but fall in with it, and finally selected a small gold heart-shaped locket. It was set with turquoises and pearls, and hung from a slender chain. "I like this," she said, "because it is blue, and it will mean my true heart, and the pearls will mean the purity of my love."

"Fine! I will wear it all the time—when you give it to me," added Judy presenting Kathleen the heart with much ceremony. "Pray accept this gift," she said. "I didn't give you any Christmas present last year, and I beg you will consider this a belated one."

"But you didn't know me last Christmas," returned Kathleen.

"That's why I didn't give you any present," replied Judy, and the two laughed merrily over this retort.

"Do you mind if I should pass over your beautiful gift to a dear friend?" asked Kathleen with gravity.

"Oh, not at all. It is yours to do with as you please," returned Judy with equal gravity.

"Then pray accept it in exchange for your darling ring."

"I will gladly do so, with thanks," replied Judy, and

Kathleen hung the chain around her neck with the air of really bestowing it.

Judy picked up the locket and kissed it. "I'll enjoy it a thousand times more now," she declared. "It means more than any piece of jewelry I possess, for it is the symbol of something precious, instead of being merely a meaningless ornament."

Then came word that the motor car was at the door, and Judy flew to prepare for the ride she meant to take with Kathleen. This seemed over all too soon, and the happy day was gone, but it was one which marked a new era for Kathleen.

CHAPTER XV

CLEANSING BY FIRE

KATHLEEN returned home in an uplifted state. To be sure the house appeared uglier than ever after Judy's lovely home, and her aunt's faultfinding, her uncle's self-importance and Jimmy's teasing cut deeper than usual, but there was a secret joy added to her days: she had a sister, a self-elected sister. And then there were the good and dear Hoveys, homely, faithful Ray, good-natured Grace, gentle, helpful Margaret. Added to these were dear Miss Bolton, who was preparing to take her leave, and rollicking, fun-loving Tilda. She was not so badly off, after all, she considered, especially if such pleasures as going to see Judy were to be added to her infrequent ones. If she had not been possessed of a sense of humor she would not have found Tilda so companionable. If there had not been a practical side to her nature she could not have been satisfied to pass so much time with Ray. If she had not been temperamental, full of sentiment and beauty-loving, her heart would not have gone out so completely to Judy. She was herself, versatile, many-

sided, and in consequence she touched very closely all these friendships.

As if to make her compensate for her day in the city her aunt kept her occupied every minute of the time on the following day. Indeed Kathleen was quite sure that this was intentional after overhearing some remarks made by her uncle. She had probably shown too much exuberance, too much elation and must be called down, she reflected, for he had said, "I reckon one such day will have to last Kathleen for a while. She mustn't get into the habit of running around with such sports as those Falkners; it will give her extravagant notions and make her despise her own home. Goodness knows, she has more than is good for her now, since she has taken up with that society or club of hers. She ought to be earning money for her keep instead of spending it in play. You keep her busy at home, Susan. That's the best thing for a girl that likes to gad."

Therefore she was not surprised that she was called upon to do this up-stairs and that down, nor was it unexpected when her aunt remarked that a girl of her age ought to be through with school and to begin to learn something more than could be studied out of books. "You waste too much time over silly reading as it is," Mrs. Wyatt remarked, and Kathleen knew

that this, too, had been under discussion. She longed to rush over to the Hoveys' to tell them all that was in her heart, but there was no opportunity given until after supper and the dishes were out of the way. Then, tired as she was, she did go.

"Where have you been all day?" inquired Ray. "I haven't seen a sign of you, and thought maybe you had stayed over with Judy."

"No such good luck," returned Kathleen grimly. "I have been paying the fiddler, as those who dance must always do, but oh, Ray, I did have such a perfect day, and if I never have another I shall never lose that."

"Come in and tell us all about it," urged Ray. "We are all dying to hear. We have been rejoicing over your good time. You knew Miss Bolton is leaving, and that Margaret is going to help us all she can. Miss Bolton says she will try to come to a monthly Council Fire, and that Margaret will be ready to become a Torch Bearer very soon."

"How we shall miss Miss Bolton," sighed Kathleen.

"We certainly shall, but if school did not begin so soon we should miss her even more. Shall you be glad to get back to the old schoolhouse, Kathleen?"

"It does not look as if I were going to have a chance to be glad."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean that my aunt and uncle think I have wasted time enough over books and that I should bend my energies to housework."

"Oh, Kathleen, is that really so? Maybe they were just talking."

"No, I think they mean it, and I am lucky if I am allowed to go to the Camp-Fire meetings; I am dreading that I shall be forbidden that next."

"Oh, Kath, you poor dear girl, don't suggest such a dreadful thing." Ray patted her hand lovingly.

"Oh, well, never mind. We won't talk about that yet. I am going to be happy while I can. I had a truly wonderful day yesterday. I'll tell you all about it."

Kathleen followed Ray into the parlor where the rest of the family were gathered in the deepening twilight, ready to welcome their neighbor and to give an attentive interest to her.

She sat down by the window, but scarcely had she begun her tale when she started to her feet with an exclamation. "Look, look," she cried, "that is surely more than lamplight over in our house! Something is on fire!" She rushed to the door, all the others following, and across the street they flew.

"Shut the shutters, quick!" ordered Miss Bolton. "We must try to avoid a draft."

Kathleen and Ray in the lead obeyed as quickly as they could, while the others rushed into the house, slammed the parlor door, and then hastened to get water and to give the alarm. Mrs. Wyatt, who was the only member of the family at home, came hurrying with buckets of water. The girls formed a bucket brigade and passed the buckets on as fast as they could.

"If only we can keep it confined to the one room," said Miss Bolton; "and if there were only a way to keep the shutters wet, I think we could master it."

"I believe my hose is long enough," cried Ray. "I can play it on the shutters from our front yard. There is a tap there." She ran off, and in the meantime Tilda, who had seen the excitement, joined her, and the two together managed to make short work of starting the hose which they directed against the shutters.

By this time other neighbors arrived and with their help the fire was finally quenched, but not before the room was almost entirely burnt out. A few things were spared, but the blackened walls, water-soaked carpet, fragments of glass and charred bits of wood showed how rapid the destruction had been. It was all over so soon that by the time the one fire engine of the village had arrived there was no need for it.

"Well, you certainly done well," remarked Cyrus

Prince, one of the first to arrive upon the scene. "For women folks you showed good sense. Most would have lost their wits, but you kep' 'em. Who was it thought o' shuttin' them shutters?"

"It was Miss Bolton," Ray told him.

"The schoolmarm? Well, now ain't she right down smart?" Cyrus looked admiringly at the little figure standing in the center of a group.

Presently Mr. Wyatt bustled up.

"Too late, Jim," cried Cyrus. "It's all out, and you're mighty lucky that your whole house ain't burnt down. You got to thank the schoolmarm and these gals for savin' it."

"How did it happen?" Mr. Wyatt asked sharply.

"We think the curtain must have blown against the lamp. We saw a glare from our house," Mrs. Hovey told him, "and we came over post-haste."

"Where was Kathleen? It was like her carelessness."

"She was over at our house and had nothing to do with it, except to be the first one to help put it out." Mrs. Hovey spoke with some heat.

"Well, I venture to say it was she who set the lamp where the curtain would blow into it." Mr. Wyatt was bound to discover a fault of Kathleen's.

"The lamp wasn't even lighted when she came

over," Grace spoke up. "I looked over as she was crossing the street, and it was dark in the parlor."

"Humph!" Mr. Wyatt was not going to give credit if he could help it. "Where is my wife?" he asked.

"She was here a moment ago, helping us with the buckets," Mrs. Hovey told him, and he entered the house.

The crowd now began to disperse. Ray went over to detach the hose. Mrs. Hovey and Miss Bolton stood talking to Mrs. Eckert. A group of boys gathered around Jimmy. They felt cheated by having arrived after the fire was out. Jimmy, feeling very important at having his house the center of attraction, was discoursing at length, being interrupted now and then by some one of his companions eager to say what he would have done if he had been on hand. Once in a while some one went to the door and surveyed the devastated room.

"Guess they'll have to refurnish complete," said one neighbor to another. "Jim Wyatt won't like that. It will hit his pocketbook pretty hard."

"Don't you believe he'll refurnish," returned the other. "They'll shut it up; that's what they'll do. You don't catch Jim Wyatt spending money if there is any way out of it."

Presently Kathleen, who had followed her uncle

into the house, came to the door. "Will some one come? Jimmy, are you there? You must run for the doctor quick. Your mother has fallen and hurt herself." Then Kathleen hurried into the house again.

There was a rush to learn of this latest excitement. The men hurried to offer assistance in carrying Mrs. Wyatt to her room. Questions and answers flew back and forth. How did it happen? Did she fall downstairs? Did she have any sort of attack? Where was she hurt? Where did Mr. Wyatt find her? Was she unconscious? and so on. The facts came out that Mrs. Wyatt had taken a candle to go into the fire-swept room, had stumbled over something, and had fallen headlong. Her husband had found her lying there moaning, had attempted to lift her to her feet, but she could not stand, complained that her leg was hurt. Yes, they had managed to carry her to her room. Mrs. Hovey was with her, and yes, Miss Bolton.

It was not long before the doctor arrived to discover that Mrs. Wyatt had broken her leg. This new disaster seemed the crowning misfortune. It would be weeks before the sufferer would be able to walk, and she must keep her room for many days. This was a dreary outlook for an active, busy woman, and the tears trickled down her cheeks as she heard the doctor's

orders. The tears gathered in Kathleen's eyes, too, as she stood there by her aunt's bedside, but she was speedily hustled out of the room by Mrs. Hovey and told not to come in again till she was called. It was the good woman's intention to spare the girl any unnecessary pain, since there was a long and wearisome ordeal before her.

Kathleen went down-stairs while the process of setting the broken leg was going on. She sat down in the kitchen, where she could be found if needed. She suddenly felt very tired, so tired that the tears would not be stayed, and she turned her face to the wall sobbing softly and wishing that she could stop.

Here Ray found her. Homely, dumpy little Ray was always ready to give comfort, to look upon the bright side, but here was indeed a woful state of affairs, and for a moment she found it hard to find any silver lining to Kathleen's cloud. She knelt down by her side, and laid her round cheek against Kathleen's hand. "Don't cry, dear old Kath," she said. "I know it is an awful muddle, but we will stand by you, and, Kath, you will never see those staring portraits and that wall paper again."

At this Kathleen began to laugh hysterically. It was like Ray to discover just such a grain of comfort, but the tears came again as she gave expression to the

thought which was uppermost. "Poor Auntie, she liked them so much, and I can never replace them for her. They are gone forever."

"You're not sorry?" cried Ray in surprise.

"I am sorry for her, but I can tell you it is a great relief to me not to have to live under the same roof with such horrors. The marble-topped table is spoiled too, the top is broken to bits, and all those ugly drapes and dreadful things that were such an eyesore have gone up in smoke. Even the carpet is beyond hope. It seems like a judgment on me," she added soberly, "for it was only this morning when I was dusting that room that I was comparing it to Judy's lovely home, and was wondering if I could ever get rid of any of the awfulness, and now you see Heaven's judgment in cleansing it by fire, and giving me no parlor at all in which to take my friends. Worse still is the accident to Auntie, so you see it is a punishment for my bad thoughts."

"Punishment, nonsense," returned Ray forcibly. "I think it is Mrs. Wyatt who is getting the punishment more than you, if you look at it that way, and she had no hard feelings against her parlor."

Kathleen laughed nervously again; it was such a funny way of stating the matter, and so like Ray to take this point of view. "You are a dear old com-

forter, Ray," she said affectionately. "I suppose I am a sentimental goose. You are always so sensible and see things so practically that you brush away all my cobwebs. Now, you see, here is Fate stepping in and giving an excellent reason for my staying away from school, so no one can say it is on account of anything my aunt and uncle may have thought or said. It is managed for me, and I can't help it, nor have I any reason to feel rebellious. All I have to do is to carry along the work here in the house as best I can, and do all in my power to make it less wearisome for Auntie; I see that."

"I don't believe you would have seen it so clearly six months ago," returned Ray, thoughtfully.

"No, I know that, and I thank the Camp-Fire for giving me a twist in the right direction. Hark, that is your mother calling."

The two girls went into the entry. Mrs. Hovey was standing at the head of the stairs. "Is that you, Ray?" she asked.

"Yes, mother," came the reply from the foot of the stairs.

"I want you to go over home and get my flannel wrapper, my felt slippers, and that gray worsted scarf that lies on the foot of my bed. I am going to stay here to-night. Tell Margaret to stir up some muf-

bins for breakfast. I shall be over by the time it is ready."

"Oh, Mrs. Hovey, is Auntie so bad as that?" asked Kathleen quaveringly.

"She is all right, but I think some one should be at hand to-night, a person of experience. I don't apprehend any danger, of course, but I would rather stay."

"Wouldn't I do as well?" asked Kathleen. "It is too bad to take you away from home."

"Go along, Ray." Mrs. Hovey paid no attention to the protest. "The doctor has gone and there is nothing to do. You bring back the things and then all of you'd better go to bed. There has been excitement enough for one night. You wait till Ray brings the things, Kathleen, and then you go to bed yourself. There is nothing for you to do."

Having everything settled in this calm and capable way gave Kathleen a sense of comforting security. She went back to see that the kitchen door was locked, and then returned to the front of the house to wait for Ray, who soon returned. Mr. Wyatt was nowhere to be seen, and Kathleen concluded he had retired for the night. She gave Ray a good-night kiss and, securing the front door, went on up-stairs. Mrs. Hovey came out to meet her.

"Now, don't lie awake thinking of unpleasant things,"

she said. "I am right here, and your aunt is doing as well as we could wish. What is done is done. We can help what may be, but there is no use wasting our vitality in worrying over what is past and gone. No amount of planning and thinking can alter it, so we must just do the best we can to prepare ourselves for what is to come. Good-night, child."

Kathleen put her arms around the good woman's neck and kissed her. "I don't know how to thank you, dear mother Hovey," she said, "but if you know any way you would like to be thanked please consider that I want to do it that way."

Mrs. Hovey gave her a hug, and then went back to the room where Mrs. Wyatt lay. Kathleen went on down the entry. As she passed Jimmy's door she heard him softly call, and went to him. He was still up. "Say, Kath," he whispered, "how's mother?"

"Mrs. Hovey says she is as comfortable as we could expect."

"How are we going to manage?"

"Mrs. Hovey is staying with her to-night. She doesn't really need a nurse."

"I didn't mean about that, but about everything, the house and all."

"I shall manage the best I can. I am not going to school, you know."

"There will be a heap to do with her to wait on."

"Yes, I know, but I will do my best, and the girls will help all they can, and the neighbors, too, so I think we can get along till your mother is about again."

"I'll help, too," said Jimmy. "You tell me when you want anything and I'll do it."

"Oh, thank you, Jimmy." Kathleen was really grateful, for Jimmy was not disposed to be thoughtful.

"You don't think I need to sit up, do you?"

"No, indeed. There is nothing to be done. Mrs. Hovey thought she would just be on hand in case Auntie wanted anything."

"Call me in the morning, will you?"

"I will. Good-night." She went on to her own room, too tired to look back over the events of the day or to look forward with dread to the morrow. Her only desire was to get into bed as quickly as possible

CHAPTER XVI

HOUSEHOLD CARES

AFTER this the days resolved themselves into a round of homely duties for Kathleen. As Mrs. Wyatt grew better she became more impatient and exacting, and Kathleen shed many a tear over failures in cooking, tasks viewed with disfavor, service unappreciated. She missed Miss Bolton who had returned to her teaching in the city, and there was no use in thinking of a chance to attend the Camp-Fire meetings. Ray and Tilda came in often to report the progress of the work, but so far as Kathleen was concerned inspiration flagged, and no interests seemed as vital as those which centered in her own home. As soon as Mrs. Wyatt was able to sit up she undertook the mending. This gave her some occupation, and relieved Kathleen of a certain wearing vigilance, but the days did not go without friction, nevertheless.

But one afternoon Judy swooped down and bore Kathleen off for a motor ride, leaving Mrs. Hovey in charge. "It is perfectly fiendish," declared Judy, "the way you are kept with your nose to the grindstone. Isn't there some one they can get to help?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned Kathleen doubtfully. "It is hard to get any one in a place like this, particularly when the mistress of the house is ill. Uncle Jimmy did propose sending for Aunt Maria, but I would rather do every bit of work myself than have her come."

Judy looked concerned. "Would it do any good if I were to come and board at the Hoveys'?" she asked. "Then I could come over every day and help you."

"You dear Judy! As if you could. But it is lovely for you to want to. You could no more do my work than I could do yours. I shall get along all right. This ride will help me immensely, for I have scarcely stepped foot out of the house since Auntie's accident. She has wanted me right at hand but as she gets better she will feel more independent and won't rely upon me so much. As soon as she gets down-stairs she says there are many things she can do. Don't worry about me, Judy dear. This ride will make me so brisk that Auntie will be encouraged to let me go out every day."

Judy registered a vow that, so far as she was concerned, the opportunity should not be wanting, and when she left Kathleen at her own door she went over to see the Hoveys. "I think it is a perfectly shameful thing the way Kathleen is tied down," she began; "I feel like picking her up this minute and carrying her off to stay forever."

"Then what would we do?" asked Ray in a distressed voice. "We all love her as much as you do."

"Oh, dear, that does make complications," confessed Judy. "You would have to come, too. But, dear me, I must go. I have been chattering so that I didn't realize the time. We shall have to speed in order to get home before dark. Don't forget, dear Camp-Fire sisters, that we must stand by Kathleen till the last horn blows." And off she went.

A few days after this came another pleasant little excitement for Kathleen. It was early in the afternoon and she was with her aunt who was going through the daily list of questions. Had she done this, had she done that, had she forgotten this thing, had she remembered the other? The catechism was interrupted by a ring at the front door. "Some of those Hoveys, I suppose," said Mrs. Wyatt petulantly. "They never let you alone; they might as well live here. Wait till I get about again and we shall see if they are quite so free with my house."

"I don't think it is any of them," returned Kathleen; "they always come around to the back door so I won't think it is a stranger. Oh, dear, I hate to keep any one waiting, but I must fasten my dress." She struggled with the hooks of the waist she was changing.

"Then it is one of the neighbors with jelly. Every one brings me jelly till I am sick and tired of it. One would suppose it the only thing that could mend a broken leg, and none of it is as good as I can make myself. There, the bell has rung a second time, Kathleen. Do make haste."

Kathleen did not wait a second time to be told to hurry, but flew down-stairs to open the door to a gray-haired lady who stood upon the step. "Why, Mrs. Baxter," she cried, "I am so glad to see you. Come right in." She led the way to the dining-room which was where callers were received nowadays.

"I heard that Susan Wyatt was ill," said Mrs. Baxter.

"Yes, she broke her leg the night of the fire. Did you hear about that?"

"Yes, I heard, and although Susan and I have never been very intimate, I thought I must come and see how she was getting along."

"She is doing very well, but it is tedious, you know, and for one who has always been so active it is very hard. As soon as she is able to move about, even with a crutch, it will make it easier for her."

"Yes, yes, of course. I can imagine that Susan, of all people, chafes under such enforced quiet. Did the fire do much damage, my dear?"

"It did not go any further than the parlor, but that was pretty well burnt out, and since then we have to receive our friends in this room."

Here came a vigorous pounding on the floor above. It was Mrs. Wyatt's method of calling attention. "Oh, Auntie wants something. Will you excuse me, Mrs. Baxter? Would you like to see her?"

"If she is willing to receive me, I shall be very pleased to," responded the lady in her little polite manner.

Kathleen hastened to her aunt, and was greeted by the eager questions, "Who is it, Kathleen, and why didn't you come and tell me?"

"It is Mrs. Baxter. I couldn't come before, for I had to talk to her a few minutes. Will you see her, Auntie?"

"Almira Baxter, Cousin Almira, did you say? Well, of all things. Of course I will see her. Get my gray wrapper out of the closet, Kathleen, and help me on with it. I hope you had brushed up the dining-room and that there were no crumbs on the floor. Did you draw down the shades after dinner, and is the kitchen door shut?"

"It is all right, Aunt Susan. There, that is better. Do you want the hand glass? Your hair is smooth, yes. I don't think you need another pin."

Having satisfied her aunt that she was in proper condition to receive a visitor, Kathleen went down to summon Mrs. Baxter. She would like to have remained but another call below stairs took her down again.

Mrs. Baxter's eyes followed her as she left the room. "What a sweet pretty girl your niece is, Susan," she said, "but I can't see that she favors the Gilmans."

"No, she doesn't, more's the pity," returned Mrs. Wyatt, sharply.

"I am sure her mother, Lucy Townley, was a very sweet girl. I remember her well."

"Oh, she was sweet enough," returned Mrs. Wyatt grudgingly, "but she was one of the kind that forgot to put stamps on a letter and left her pocket handkerchief at home when she went to town. We Gilmans were always practical, and it does put us out to have to stand any of these muzzy headed people."

"Is your niece like that?" asked Mrs. Baxter. "She seems rather a capable girl, it seems to me."

"She'd better not be anything else. Mr. Wyatt and I made up our mind that we would have no foolishness, and we've brought her up to realize that what is wanted in this house is practical people. She's better than she used to be, but she has still a lot of ideas that she must get rid of before we'll be satisfied. She has taken up with some fashionable people lately and we are afraid

she will get spoiled. As soon as we see any signs we don't like we shall put a stop to it. She's a pretty good girl as long as she is kept busy, and I haven't any complaint to make at present. We have hopes that she will turn out well."

"She seems very lovable, and has a charming voice; it reminds me of her mother's when she speaks. Does she go to school, Susan?"

"She has been going till this year, but she can't be spared now, and Mr. Wyatt thinks she'd better turn her attention to learning about housekeeping instead of poring over books; she is only too ready to waste her time over reading."

Mrs. Baxter changed the subject. It was evident that Mrs. Wyatt had not approved of her sister-in-law, and only half approved of Kathleen because she was like her mother. The visit was not a long one, for there had never been much in common between these two relatives. Kathleen came up again before the visit was ended, and once below stairs Mrs. Baxter lingered.

"You must call me Cousin Almira," she said, "and you must come and see me whenever you can. I remember your mother very well. She was a charming woman and we all thought your father a very lucky man when he won her."

"Really?" Kathleen's sweet eyes opened wide and a

lovely smile broke over her face. "I am so glad to have you say that," she went on, "for I never have been told nice things about my mother. I—I am afraid Aunt Susan never cared very much for her."

"My dear," replied Mrs. Baxter, "it takes all kinds of people to make up the world, and you couldn't expect a hen to appreciate a singing bird; one is always looking earthward and spends her time pecking around while the other seeks the upper air. I suppose," added the old lady with a smile, "the world is obliged to admit that hens are more useful, but I should be sorry to live without the singing birds."

Kathleen gave a little rippling laugh. "How dear of you to say that," she said. "You don't know how happy it makes me. Some day will you tell me more about my mother? Some day when I can come to see you?"

"Indeed I will, my dear, and let me tell you that you are not a bit like the Gilmans. I will whisper something to you: I don't admire the Gilmans one bit, and I am glad my relationship comes in on another line. I will tell you something else: I wish you were my niece instead of Susan Wyatt's. Now, there I have said quite enough and I must go, but I like you very much, my dear, and I want to see more of my little cousin."

She left Kathleen with a new cause for happiness.

Here was another one who loved her, and better still who had loved her mother. Kathleen had always felt fearfully certain that her mother was not one who could be very greatly approved of because she was given to understand that a person who failed to put stamps on her letters and who forgot her pocket handkerchief when she went to church was capable of greater enormities only vaguely hinted at. That any one could consider her father fortunate in his marriage had never suggested itself to her, for he was always spoken of as "poor Philip," and in some unspoken way it was conveyed to Kathleen that the "poor" was the consequent adjective of an unfortunate marriage.

When Margaret came over to help her with the dishes that evening she found the girl with a touch of color in her face and a happier look in her eyes. "Two lovely things have happened in one week, Margie," she said. "First along comes dear Judy and takes me off on that delightful ride, then to-day appeared dear Cousin Almira Baxter. Oh, she is a dear, and she told me things about my mother that I never heard. She says she was lovely, and that they all thought my father very lucky to have such a wife. I never knew that before."

"Didn't you?" Margaret looked at her, realizing that there are two sides to every question, and that

Mrs. Wyatt's estimate of her sister-in-law, however just from her standpoint, might be questioned by more than one other.

"She said I was like her," Kathleen went on, sousing her dish-mop up and down in the water.

"Then we know your father was lucky," returned Margaret with a smile.

Kathleen allowed the mop to float off in the water. "Do you really mean that? I believe you do, for it isn't like you to pay unmeaning compliments. I confess I used to feel rather ashamed of being like my mother, for Aunt Sue always tells me so as a sort of reproach, or else as if I were to be pitied for not being like the Gilmans. I should like to be fond of my father, too," she added wistfully, "though I must say it is a great joy to be able to be proud of my mother. Do you know, Margaret, I was just thinking before you came in that almost all my joys date from the day Ray and I first saw the Camp-Fire Girls on the mountain. Miss Bolton, Mrs. Furnival, Judy, Cousin Almira Baxter, Miss Keene, and our own dear Ohuanuáh-Nah. Isn't it strange how much good can come from such a small beginning, and sometimes when everything seems darkest suddenly comes a golden beam of light that changes the whole world for you?"

"I don't believe I have as many ups and downs as

you, Kathleen," returned Margaret. "My life flows on serenely and happily, and I don't find myself hunting around for joys; they just come along with my daily life."

"That is because you have a real mother and a real home and real sisters," Kathleen answered. "But there, I am not going to complain, for I feel as if I had found my real mother to-day and I am very happy about it."

She did feel a new happiness and a new reverence that night when she went to her room and shut herself away from all the trials and worries of the day. She opened the little writing desk which she had found among her mother's things, and from it she took a photograph which she kept there. She set it up on the table before her and looked long and earnestly at the pictured face. "Mother, dear mother," she breathed, "I am so glad I can keep you warm and close in my heart, in the very choicest corner of all. I have you safe now, dear mother. I have you safe. I have you at last where you belong." Then she softly kissed the picture and put it back with a look upon her face that it would have given Cousin Almira Baxter pleasure to see.

CHAPTER XVII

SEEKING BEAUTY

AS Margaret said, there were surely ups and downs for Kathleen, for just as she had reached an attitude of patient acceptance of her daily duties, there came the unexpected and unwelcome announcement that Aunt Maria was coming to make a visit.

"And how we are to get along without a parlor I don't know," complained Mrs. Wyatt. "Maria will have callers, and very likely Ned will be coming with his bride. Your uncle has been to such expense with doctor's bills and all that, he can't be expected to do anything toward refurnishing."

"Do you think he would be willing to spend anything?" asked Kathleen.

"I'm pretty sure he wouldn't spare enough to do any good. Have you been into the room lately?"

"Not since we turned the key on it," Kathleen told her.

"I suppose things are in pretty bad condition. I don't suppose there will be a thing left that we can use. I wish you would go in some time to-day and tell

me just how bad it is. Some things may have dried out, and they may not have been so ruined as to be of no use."

"I will see," Kathleen answered, her thoughts busy with possibilities. She was wondering how much she could do by herself. The constant presence of Aunt Maria would be hard to endure, and never to get away from her was an appalling prospect. Aunt Maria liked to sit at the front window, especially on Sundays, and watch the people go by. She would never cease to harp on this deprivation of her previous custom.

"I suppose you will have to give her your room," Mrs. Wyatt went on, bringing Kathleen face to face with another unpleasant prospect.

"And where can I go?" asked Kathleen a little tremulously.

"You will have to sleep in the attic while she is here. It is very comfortable up there except in mid-winter. That reminds me that we shall have to get the parlor cleared out somehow, so as to have a fire there and heat the rooms above. Perhaps James will be willing to paper, and we could set a chair or two in there so your Aunt Maria can see out."

"How long will she stay?" Kathleen felt rebellious and spoke coldly.

"Dear me, how can I tell? Your uncle can't limit

the visit of his own flesh and blood sister. She will stay as long as she chooses to. I should think you'd be glad enough to have her; she will be such a help. She said she would have come before, as soon as she heard of my accident, but she had to get ready for the wedding. I can't go, of course, but your uncle will, and he'll bring his sister back with him."

"When is it?"

"Oh, it's ten days off. We'll have to give a wedding present, and that's another expense, so you see there is no hope of doing anything for the parlor."

An hour later Tilda, searching through the lower rooms for Kathleen, came upon her standing in the middle of the parlor. She had opened the shutters, which, a little charred on the inside, were not otherwise damaged. Kathleen turned a laughing face to her friend. "Aren't they funny?" she said.

"What?"

Kathleen pointed to the two portraits which she had set up side by side in front of her. The glass which covered them was shattered. Across the self-satisfied smirk of Mr. Wyatt were lines and cuts which gave him an expression of fiendish glee, while a gash upon the face of Mrs. Wyatt did away with her nose entirely. Both pictures were charred around the edges, and were in a hopeless condition.

Tilda could but laugh. "They are funny," she said. "I never did like them, however, though I suppose Mrs. Wyatt will mourn their loss."

"Poor Auntie, so she will. I shouldn't be so absolutely glad to get rid of them, though, fortunately, she is not one to waste sentiment. Aunt Maria is coming, Tilda."

"Worse luck. Why do you call her aunt, Kathleen? She is not your aunt."

"No, she is not, thank fortune. Worse luck and Thank fortune should offset one another, by the way. I call her aunt because it is expected of me, I suppose."

"Is she going to make a long stay?"

"That is as she chooses. It will be too long for me however short it is."

"She is very capable, isn't she? She will help you."

"Oh, she will help. At least she will sweep me aside as if I were a fly on the wall except when she wants me to do the things she doesn't like to do. She is a very up-and-coming woman, is Aunt Maria, and we shall have to walk a chalk line, I can tell you. She is my sworn enemy and I am not going to have a happy time of it; all the same I am looking into the possibilities of this room, and I am priming for a surprise. The first thing is to clear the deck for action, I sup-

pose. Then I must do something to the walls. Farewell, mustard colored paper and liver-y impossible flowers! There isn't much left of you, but what is shall soon disappear. The carpet will have to come up and then there will be a bare floor. Do you see any possibility at all in what remains of the carpet?"

Tilda scanned the stained floor covering. "It isn't worth having cleaned," she commented.

"I should say not, and I am rather glad to see it go the way of the wall paper. We will send out the liver-y roses and the pink ones hand in hand. Do see how the red has run down the wall into the carpet." She pointed to the splotches of red all along the edges.

Tilda looked at the carpet thoughtfully. "I have heard that there is a place where you can send old carpets and have them rewoven into rugs. I have seen some, and they are really very pretty."

"Where did you see them?"

"At Anna Metz's. I will ask her about them."

"Do find out for me how much it costs. If it isn't too much maybe I could pay for it myself, for you know I still have my little hoard."

"That you are saving toward Camp-Fire things?"

"Yes, but never mind. Who knows if I am ever going to have a chance to go to any more meetings? A rug in the hand is worth two Camp-Fire hats in the

bush. We won't talk about that now. I'd like to see the rugs, for if I am going to do over this room I am determined to carry out the first behest of our Camp-Fire Law and seek beauty."

"I will tell you what I can do," said Tilda. "I will get Anna to let me bring a rug to show you. There is one quite small one which will be nothing to carry." Tilda was always ready to see a way out of difficulties.

"That will be fine, if you don't mind doing it," replied Kathleen enthusiastically. "You girls are such a comfort, I don't know how I could live without you. Now, I am going over to that end of the room where the things escaped better than at this end. You'd better stay there, for there is a lot of broken glass and stuff to pick one's way through."

"Are you going to paper right over the old paper?" asked Tilda, watching the progress through the debris.

"No, I'm going to try to get it all off."

"It will be an awful job."

"I know it will. If I had my uninterrupted time to do the room I know I could do a great deal, but there's the rub."

"We'll all turn in and help," Tilda was quick to offer. "I'll get the boys to come some evening and we can make short work of the paper."

"You blessed child! What a load off my shoulders."

"What are you going to do to the walls once they are rid of the paper?"

"I have a plan which I will divulge later. It depends upon the state of my finances. Tilda, this sofa and these three chairs would do very well if they could be re-upholstered. They aren't even charred, and as for that table, if I could get a board top to replace the marble one it would do, for I could put a cover on it."

"For invention commend me to Kathleen Gilman," returned Tilda.

"That is the good of an imagination," returned Kathleen gaily. She was really enjoying the prospect of doing much with little.

"These two chairs aren't so very bad," remarked Tilda rubbing her finger along the smoky top of a small chair near her, "and this wicker one is quite good."

"Oh, that wicker chair was brought in from the porch the other day. It would do very well if it were painted and the other two could be painted to match."

"Not gilded?"

"I said painted," returned Kathleen severely. "Don't bring me any such Philistine suggestions. Is there a gilded chair in Judy's house, or in Mrs. Furnival's?"

"I don't know," replied Tilda meekly.

"There isn't," Kathleen spoke with decision. "I am seeking beauty as I have seen it revealed to me in Judy's room. I hope she won't mind me copying her ideas."

"She won't," Tilda assured her. "She isn't that kind."

"That is my opinion. Now let us take account of stock. One sofa and three chairs to be upholstered. Two chairs, no, three, to be painted. Chairs enough. One table to have a new top. Walls cleaned of the liver and mustard covering and done over. Carpet taken up and made into rugs, if possible. Money for rugs, for paint, for upholstering—I am thinking of cretonne, by the way. Cheese-cloth curtains if the money holds out, and I think I have come to the end of the resources."

"Oh, Kath, you certainly are a genius. I do hope you can do all you want. Count on me for anything I can do to help, and also count on my influence in working the boys up to a pitch of enthusiasm in doing their part. They are good fellows, and since you have had such hard times, I have heard every one say that they would do anything they could for you, so I think we may count on them."

"Bless you all, my children. Remember, Tilda, that

this is a secret ; at least I want to keep it for a surprise for Auntie when she comes down. She is counting upon doing it the day before Aunt Maria gets here. Uncle will be away so he won't see the finish. I am really wildly excited over it. Do run and ask Ray to come and talk it over. I don't want to leave her out of it when my first fire of enthusiasm is glowing so brightly. There is Auntie knocking ; I must go."

She left Tilda to report to the Hoveys and herself went up to her aunt. "Where have you been so long ?" asked Mrs. Wyatt.

"Looking over the things in the parlor. Some of them aren't so very bad, but I can't do anything without a little money for the walls and so on. You never saw such a looking carpet, all stained and smoked and streaked ; that will have to come up first thing after we get the room cleared. There isn't a picture or an ornament left, the lamp is smashed to bits and so is the top of the table."

Mrs. Wyatt sighed. "It is rather hopeless, just as I thought."

"If we could do something with the things that are possible, it might be made decent to sit in, but one thing is certain those walls are perfectly horrible."

"I will see what your uncle can spare. I don't suppose we could get the room papered, even with the

cheapest paper, for less than five dollars, and that is a low estimate."

"If you can get me the money, I will manage the very best I can. There are places in the city where one can get odd rolls of paper; I have seen them advertised. I know Miss Bolton or one of the girls would go and get it if we decided to paper. Tilda thinks the boys will come over and scrape off the old paper, so that expense will be spared."

"Well, I am glad that somebody is willing to do something," returned Mrs. Wyatt, much as if she had been left in the middle of a desert during all this time.

"We shall have to act quickly," Kathleen reminded her, "for ten days will go mighty soon."

"It may be that they will go fast enough for you, but they drag for me, sitting here by myself," complained Mrs. Wyatt.

"But you will find out as soon as you can what Uncle can afford to spend."

"Oh, yes, yes, I suppose so, but it isn't a pleasant mission. Why don't you ask him yourself?"

"I? Why, he would never give it to me."

"I am not so sure. However, I will put it on the ground that we must get ready for Maria; he will do more for his own folks than for us, I'll warrant you."

So the matter was left, but Kathleen did not let the

grass grow under her feet. She first counted over her own small hoard of coins, then she began to clear out the room. The boys helped in this as well as in the undertaking of clearing the walls of the paper. They made a regular lark of it, and after the last bit of paper had been removed from the walls, they carried it out and went to work to take up the carpet. This accomplished they all went in a body to the Eckerts' where Tilda regaled them upon chocolate and cakes.

Whether this moved Mr. Wyatt to unwonted generosity Kathleen did not know, but the next day, with a great air of bestowing largess, he gave her five dollars to spend upon furnishing the room. As Kathleen confided to Ray, "You would have supposed he had given me enough to furnish a palace."

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Ray. "I should think it would be very hard to decide."

"I am going to buy a wash for the walls, some paint, and if there is any left I will spend it in cretonne."

The boys spoke to put on the wash and to help with the painting. As for the cretonne, an astounding piece of good fortune came Kathleen's way. It was on the day that Judy came over and fairly dragged her off for a drive, in spite of her protests that she could not take the time.

"You can work twice as well afterward," Judy declared and finally they set off to see Cousin Almira Baxter of whom Kathleen had longed to get a glimpse since that memorable day of her visit.

It was Judy who made a gay report of Kathleen's efforts to furbish up the fire-swept room, and Cousin Almira was so interested that she asked many questions and found out all Kathleen's needs.

"She won't let any of us give her a thing for it," Judy said; "she is the most determined youngster you ever saw, Mrs. Baxter, mild and harmless as she appears."

Mrs. Baxter looked across with a smile at Kathleen, at the pretty way she held her head when she was listening, at the tender look in her eyes as she heard Judy's affectionately playful manner of speaking of her friend. "Maybe she will not let a flippant young thing like you," said Cousin Almira, "but she cannot refuse an old relative like me. If your young friends can help you with their time and strength you will accord me the privilege of offering something which means no loss to me and may be of use to you. I have a bundle of stuff up-stairs which was used as drapery, curtains or something in one of our rooms. I thought it too heavy, took it down after a few weeks and there it is. Perhaps it would be of service in covering your

sofa and chairs. Will you come with me and look at it?"

Kathleen could but follow, and to Judy's joy she returned with the bundle in her arms. "It is really nothing to offer," insisted Mrs. Baxter, "merely a bundle I am glad to get rid of, so please carry it away with my good wishes and my regret that it is not a better gift."

And so Kathleen carried it back with her, her face all alight with the prospect of beautifying the room which just then promised to fall short of what she had really hoped for. "It is beautiful," she told Judy, uncovering a corner for her to see. "Such a lovely pattern and such soft beautiful coloring, yet bright enough, exactly what I dreamed of, but much more expensive than I could afford. I really couldn't refuse it."

"Refuse it? Refuse that dear old lady anything?" cried Judy. "Why, if she were to offer me sawdust cakes and quinine tea I would cheerfully partake of them. Isn't she a dear with her soft old skin, her white hair and her little punctilious way of speaking? I wish she were my grandmother." So Kathleen had no further qualms about accepting the stuff for the sofa and chairs, and, with the help of the capable Hoveys, made a good job of it. Jimmy had been let into the secret, and would gladly have contributed, but as usual

his pockets were empty of all coin, and there was no use in applying to his parents for more, that he well knew. However, he did come to the fore one day when he bore in something carefully wrapped up in paper.

"I heard you say you were sorry you hadn't any pictures," he said, "and I swopped my fishing rod for this." He tore off the papers and exhibited a not unpleasing reproduction of a very good painting. It was in a neat gilded frame.

"Why, Jimmy," exclaimed Kathleen, "where in the world did you get it?"

"From Harvey Dean. It was in his room and he said he didn't care for it particularly. It was his all right," he added eagerly, "so he had a right to do as he chose with it. I've been snooping around to see what I could pick up on a swop, and I got it all right, all right. What do you think of it?"

"I think it is very nice, very nice, Jimmy. It is much better than anything we had on the walls before. It was lovely of you to get it the way you did."

"I don't mind," declared Jimmy. "I can't go fishing till next summer anyway, and then perhaps I can get another rod. Mine was a dandy, though," he added a little regretfully.

"Well, never mind. Perhaps a better one will come your way. I often find, Jimmy, that when we give up

something we like that the first thing we know something we would rather have comes to us. Come, let's hang the picture before anything happens to it."

"Gee, but it looks nice," said Jimmy when they had the picture in place. "It begins to look fine in here, Kath. Won't mother be surprised?"

"I do hope she will and that she will like it. The Hovey girls are finishing the curtains for me and we shall put them up to-morrow before your mother comes down."

The curtains were the last touch. Judy brought out some stencils and colors and helped the girls make a pretty dainty border. She declared she would feel left out if she could not have a hand in the work.

Long before noon the next day Mrs. Wyatt began to hurry Kathleen and finally became so impatient that she insisted that she would come down anyway, if she had to crawl, so Kathleen had to make short work of last things and with Jimmy's assistance helped her aunt down the steps.

"Where do you want to go first?" she asked Mrs. Wyatt.

"It seems to me I'd like to get a glimpse of the kitchen," was the answer.

"You'd better take a look into the parlor," suggested Jimmy with a wink at Kathleen.

"What for? There can't be much there to see, not even new paper on the walls, nothing but some kind of wash, I hear. However, I may as well stop there and rest before I go on."

She clumped along with her crutches through the entry to the door of the parlor, Jimmy and Kathleen following close. The sun was shining brightly, striking into livelier color a bowl of nasturtiums, which Ray had brought in that morning, and touching the gilt frame of Jimmy's picture.

Mrs. Wyatt looked around in amazed silence for a moment then she exclaimed: "Well, I declare!"

"How do you like it?" inquired Jimmy anxiously.

"It looks real nice, considering. Of course it is plainer than it was, but somehow it is pretty."

And pretty it really was. Kathleen had asked Judy's permission to adopt the color scheme of her room and had carried it out as nearly as she could. Soft gray of walls was matched in the paint and in those pieces of furniture that had to be renewed. The rugs on the floor were subdued in tone, and looked well with the gray; the pretty cretonne coverings gave all the color needed, and the soft cheese-cloth curtains mellowed the light.

"Jimmy brought the picture," said Kathleen. "Isn't it a pretty one?"

"Yes, but I miss the portraits," said Mrs. Wyatt with a sigh. "The picture is right nice, Jimmy, and maybe we can come across some more some day. They give away right pretty advertisements sometimes."

It was Kathleen's turn to sigh. Was her work to be spoiled by the addition of crude advertisements?

"Where did you get the rugs?" asked Mrs. Wyatt as these caught her eye. "I know five dollars didn't do all. I hope you haven't allowed any of your rich friends to make us objects of charity, Kathleen."

"Nobody has given one single thing except Cousin Almira Baxter, and she said as she was a relative she knew you wouldn't mind my using some cretonne she had to cover the chairs and sofa. Don't you recognize the old carpet?"

"The old carpet? Where?"

"In the rugs. Tilda told me of a place where they reweave carpets into this kind of rugs."

"And Kath paid for the work out of her own money," put in Jimmy.

"Well, I declare," said Mrs. Wyatt using her favorite expression again. "Who would have thought it? You've done real well, children, and I don't feel one bit ashamed to have Maria see the room. Maybe she won't admire it, but I like it, and I guess James will,

too. Anyhow he will be pleased with your doing so much on such little outlay. I didn't think it was in you, Kathleen."

"It is all due to the Camp-Fire," Kathleen told her. "I took the idea from Judy Falkner's room. She has much the same coloring and she didn't mind my copying. Of course it isn't just the same, but she has the gray walls and paint and furniture. We never could have done it if the girls and boys hadn't been so ready to come and help; they all worked so hard and have been so interested. If you like it, Auntie, I don't care what Aunt Maria thinks. As for myself I just love it."

"Well, if it is good enough for Judy Falkner I reckon it is good enough for us," decided Mrs. Wyatt, and Kathleen felt that as much appreciation as she could expect had been given.

The remainder of the day Mrs. Wyatt spent in the dining-room and kitchen, places of much more importance to her, but whenever she had a chance Kathleen would steal to the door of the parlor and take a peep at the place which so nearly satisfied her. She would stand and look around, making up her mind what she would add if she could. There should be a pretty lamp with just the right shade, a few more pictures, some book shelves, another table. Yes, that would be enough. Maybe some day she could have all these.

If only, oh, if only they would not spoil it with some unspeakably dreadful things which would destroy the whole effect. "Seek beauty." She had sought it and what a satisfying feeling it gave her to find it. The bare little attic room which she must call hers while Aunt Maria was making her visit did not appal her, since she could now turn her energies to beautifying that. She didn't know just how, but she would search out a way, and at once she began weaving inventions which filled her mind the rest of the day.

CHAPTER XVIII

WASTE PLACES MADE GLAD

THEN Aunt Maria came and all of Kathleen's belongings were consigned to the attic room under the eaves. The belongings were not many, few books and no pictures, for Kathleen had cast away the advertising calendars, and the possession of books was scarcely allowed, certainly not encouraged. The room was a dingy little place, lighted by a single window, though fortunately a good-sized one, and showing dull-colored walls, disfigured by lead pencil marks, and splotchy stains. The whitewash was peeling off in spots and the paint was worn. Kathleen had cleaned and tidied up the room as best she could but it was a forlorn looking spot to which she invited Judy that they might have a good talk in retirement.

"We may count on not being interrupted," Kathleen told her friend, "if you don't mind going up to my room. Aunt Sue has no wish to climb the stairs with her lame leg, and Aunt Maria, though her curiosity is unlimited, is just now preparing a favorite dish of

hers and wouldn't leave it for anything. I am taking you to a very ugly place, but you mustn't be shocked."

It was an ugly place; Judy thought she had never seen a more depressing one as she sat down by the window and looked around. "It has possibilities," she declared after taking a careful survey.

"Oh, Judy, do you really think so?" Kathleen spoke joyfully. "All my imagination has been used up on the parlor, and I can't see a thing I can do here."

"Did you have any of the wall coloring left? We'll begin with that."

"I had a whole package, but somehow I feel so gray myself up here where I get so little sunshine that I don't want to put it on this wall, although I suppose it would look much better than this scaly whitewash."

"If you have a whole unopened package why can't you change it for something of a different color? A deep cream would be pretty, not too much yellow, but just enough to give a sunny effect and brighten up the room."

"Of course I could change it. Cyrus Prince is always the most obliging person, and as long as the package is unopened, why, of course. I should never have thought of it. I have some white paint left that

I used to mix with the gray to get the tone I wanted down-stairs. Would that be all right up here?"

"Certainly; true colonial buff and white. That is a perfectly dear chair you are sitting in, Kathleen. I'd give anything to have one like it."

"This old thing? Why, Auntie stuck it off up here to get it out of the way; she thought it so ugly."

"All the same it is a delightful design. I don't know what the collectors would call it, Hepplewhite, or Chippendale or what, but it is a dear, and is worth something, I can tell you."

Kathleen turned around and viewed the chair with its slender spindles, its queer, high back in two sections, its faded gilt flowers. "I suppose I could paint it," she remarked.

"Paint it!" cried Judy. "Oh, my dear, you would utterly spoil it. Don't think of such a thing. Half its charm is in its looking just as it does. I see I must give you some lessons on the value of antiques. I will allow you to put a cushion on it, but no more, an' you love me."

"I have some pieces of the cretonne left."

"Fine. Then you could put little white curtains to the window, that old chest in front of it—— Why did you poke it off in the corner, by the way?"

"I thought it was so queer."

"It is delightful and just harmonizes with our scheme. Over the door I would put a shelf with two or three old pieces of blue china, and on that funny little mantel I would put two brass candlesticks. The floor is pretty bad, but you could stain it, and if you only had some braided mats, it would be quite in keeping. You could have two or three pots of flowers in the window which would help out. The bed isn't so bad, and with that patchwork quilt follows out the colonial idea." She turned around and took another survey of the room. Presently she arose, rushed across the room and eagerly lifted the cover from a small stand which stood near the old chest. "Why, Kathleen Gilman," she exclaimed, "the idea of covering up this darling work stand. Do let us get it over here by the window. What discoveries we are making in this place that seemed so hopeless. I shouldn't be surprised now that I have seen the way you have poked treasures out of sight, that we shall find more. Did that mirror always have a gilt frame? It looks to me as if the gilding were put on over something else. May I see?"

"Of course you may." Kathleen watched while Judy scraped off some of the outer surface.

"Just as I thought. It is a mahogany frame, and I shouldn't be surprised if that were a mahogany bureau. Such vandalism." She turned a laughing face to Kath-

leen. "Dear old thing, you will have the treasurest room in the whole house, but don't tell them so."

"They wouldn't believe me if I did," returned Kathleen. "They would simply laugh at me."

"I believe you, when I consider the taste that furnished the late *unlamented* parlor. Kathleen, my dear, as you get time, do please get off this awful dingy gilt, and the yellow paint that hides the mahogany. Of course it will take time, but you can do little by little, and after a while you will have a thing of beauty. Do you suppose your aunt will object?"

"Oh, dear, no. She has a contempt for all this stuff, as she calls it, and has put it up here because it is the attic. She would never use it down-stairs even after it is turned back into its original state. I think she would like me to have the braided mats, for she approves of sewing carpet rags. I can do those evenings. Mrs. Hovey will show me how to make the mats."

"One large one here by the bed and a smaller one over there at that end of the room. I should like a colored print or two on the wall, something in keeping, but I suppose that would be out of the question. Well, Kathleen, dear, I haven't had such fun in a month of Sundays. I shall be wild to see how it all comes out."

"You shall see, if only I get time to do it," said Kathleen with a little sigh. "Of course now that

Auntie is down-stairs again, and Aunt Maria has come there isn't so much for me to do in one way, but in another there is, for they see to it that I am not allowed to do anything but what they approve, and Aunt Maria is one who does not believe in letting any one rest."

"Poor dear." Judy patted her arm lovingly. "Well, you may have to take a long time at it, but it will pay in the end. Brace up, sister dear, and try not to fall back into a habit of self-pity; if you do you are lost, utterly lost. I know, for I came near to being a goner myself. I am getting over it, I think, yet once in a while when I see nothing but useless frivols held up to me as a standard I do drop in a heap and think I am about as badly used a person as there is. A little book shelf would look well over there, and would give a cozy sort of air to the room. Where do you keep your books, Kathleen?"

Kathleen pointed to a row of five which stood on the little narrow shelf. "Those are all I have," she said.

"Really?" Judy looked in astonishment from the books to their owner.

"Every blessed one. You don't know my family if you think they are going to give me books to waste my time upon. Two of those you see were given

as prizes at school, another my Sunday-school teacher gave me, and the other two the Hoveys gave me as Christmas gifts."

"You poor dear child! What do you read?"

"I borrow from the girls when I can, and there is a box of books that belonged to my mother, but Auntie won't let me have them in my room. Once in a while she lets me have one out, but I must put it back before I can have another, and she must see what I take before I am allowed to have it at all. No novels, no poetry, is what she says. I have the volume of Longfellow that Margaret gave me, but that is all I own."

"But your mother's books should be yours."

"I shall claim them some day, but I can't now. If it were not for what I have had to read and study at school, I don't know what I should have done. They couldn't forbid that when it came in with my other lessons. I wish there were a library in town, then maybe I could get a book once in a while."

"Why—why," Judy clasped her hand excitedly, "that would be just the thing for the Camp-Fire Girls to do. It should surely come in under patriotism, for it would be for the betterment of the town. I am going to speak to Miss Bertie Bolton right away, and to Miss Keene, too. They will know how to go about

it. I know lots of girls who would be glad to contribute books. You start the ball rolling here, Kathleen, and I will do what I can at my end of the line."

"Oh, Judy, what a ministering angel you are," cried Kathleen. "It is really something that could be done, and we need it in this little town."

"Then it is up to us to fill the need. But I must be going, dear. I always overstay my time. I am so sorry you couldn't have a ride to-day, but I realize that you couldn't go if the powers that be said you couldn't."

Kathleen saw her off, and then as there seemed no immediate demand for her down-stairs she crept back again to her little room where the evening shadows were already beginning to gather. She realized that it might be much improved, but she also realized that the winter was coming and that it would be a cold and shivery spot, only heated by the warmth which it might gather from the floors below. There was no register, no stove, and although she might make it a more attractive retreat so far as looks went, it would be comfortless enough when the snow began to fly. Moreover, she felt very tired these days, and Aunt Maria's continual attitude of disapproval did not offer any great encouragement for the girl to undertake any innovations. It seemed to her that she was forever

fighting to get out of the way of sharp corners. Her best efforts were censured, her opinions flouted, her requests denied. Aunt Maria had begun by thinking no good could come out of a daughter of Lucy Townley, and, like her brother, was not going to alter her opinion if she could help it. To the end of the chapter she would misunderstand, impute wrong motives, allow no explanation, condemn without reason. She had made fun openly of Kathleen's efforts to reestablish the parlor, had remarked within her hearing that the attic was the place for a girl who lived on charity, had scoffed at the Camp-Fire movement, and had advised that she be forbidden to take up with "upstartish people." So, as Kathleen sat there in the gathering twilight, even Judy's bright presence, her hopeful outlook, her warm friendship could not do away with the shadows which seemed to be gathering thicker and thicker around the future.

As for Judy as she was whirled home, her thoughts were busy with so many things that she wished the way longer. She thought of the books crowding her own shelves, of the gifts poured upon her, of her own dainty and luxurious room, of the love and tenderness her parents continually showed her. "I am an ungrateful sort of creature," she murmured to herself as she went up the steps. As she passed the door of her

mother's room she paused for a moment instead of going directly to her own room.

"Is that you, daughter?" she heard her mother say.

"It is your just returned child," answered Judy going in. "Want me for anything in particular, mamma?"

"I wondered if you would care to go with me to a little musicale at the Fergusons' this evening. Had you planned anything special to do?" The mother's eyes scanned her daughter's face a little wistfully.

Judy was silent a moment. She had planned to see Miss Bolton about the prospective library at Brightwood. Miss Bolton was free evenings, and would gladly come over, Judy knew.

"Your father can't go," Mrs. Falkner went on. "I know you don't care for the Fergusons, but you won't have to see much of them, you know."

What a selfish wretch I am, thought Judy. "I'll go, mumsey," she replied, trying to speak cheerfully.

Her mother's face brightened. It was not often that her daughter agreed so readily to any proposition of this kind. There was generally a long argument which was liable to end in Judy's having her own way. She always persuaded herself that it was the right way, but somehow this evening she began to have doubts whether hers was always the right way. Something

about that forlorn little attic room had suddenly awakened a new sense of her own privileges.

The music was not particularly good to which she listened that evening, and the people she met afterward were such as she inwardly despised as shallow, frivolous, and uninteresting, but somehow she did not regret her evening.

As for Kathleen, she was not allowed to sit long dreaming away the moments in her retreat, for presently she was called below to wash up the great pile of dishes which Aunt Maria had left after her cooking operations, and struggling with pots and pans Kathleen had no time to dwell upon the pleasant things which she and Judy had talked over. She was called off by her Aunt Susan from the final operation of cleaning sink and dish-pan, and when she returned she found Aunt Maria had undertaken to finish the job, saying, as Kathleen came in : "I'd be ashamed to have any one see a sink and dish-pan of mine in such a condition, and so I took it upon myself to give them the cleaning they needed."

"I hadn't finished cleaning up. Auntie called me off for something particular. I meant to come back." Kathleen tried to explain.

"Oh, that's the excuse, is it?" returned Mrs. Stebbins. "You are always ready enough with one."

And Aunt Maria walked out of the kitchen majestically.

Kathleen sighed. There was no use in trying to explain. She went to the sink to get her ring which she had carefully taken off and had placed for safety upon the little shelf directly above the sink, but no ring was there. She searched high and low, getting down on her knees to feel along the floor lest by chance it had rolled off into some corner. She examined dish-cloths and soap dish, and even went over the dishes to see if by accident a cup, saucer or plate should contain her treasure, but no such luck.

In great distress Kathleen went to the parlor where Mrs. Wyatt and Mrs. Stebbins were sitting. "Oh, Auntie," she cried, "I have lost my lovely ring that Judy gave me. I can't find it anywhere. I have looked and looked and it seems totally to have disappeared."

"Where did you have it last?" inquired Mrs. Wyatt.

"I took it off when I was going to do the dishes. I was afraid the hot water might hurt the setting. I put it on the little shelf over the sink. You didn't see anything of it, did you, Aunt Maria?"

"Do you expect me to spend my time keeping track of your belongings?" came the response. "I have

something better to do, I can assure you. I have always maintained, Susan, as you are well aware, that a girl in your niece's position should not be parading around with expensive jewelry on."

"It wasn't so very expensive," protested Kathleen; "Judy said it wasn't."

"It is worth much more than you will ever earn," scoffed Mrs. Stebbins. "You'd much better have sold it to buy yourself shoes and such things."

"But it was Judy who gave it to me as a token of our friendship. I couldn't sell a keepsake like that."

"No answering back," quoth Mrs. Stebbins; "that is one thing I will not stand. I don't see, Susan, why you haven't broken this girl of the habit of contradicting. In the Wyatt family we were taught better."

Kathleen bit her lip and cast an appealing glance at her aunt who said: "You'd better go back and take another look, Kathleen. Get Jimmy to help you." And Kathleen, glad to escape, hunted up Jimmy who was more concerned at the loss than she could have expected. Together they hunted the place over but the ring did not come to light, and they decided to wait till daytime to make another search.

However, just after Kathleen had gone to her room for the night she heard a gentle tap on her door and a hoarse whisper: "Kath, I say, Kath, are you up?"

Kathleen opened the door to see Jimmy, in his stocking feet, standing there. "I'm up," she replied. "What is it, Jimmy?"

The boy came in and closed the door softly. "I believe I know where your ring is," he said, still whispering.

"Oh, Jimmy, where?"

"I believe she's got it."

"Who?"

"Aunt Maria."

"You don't mean to say she would try to rob me of it?"

"I don't know what you'd call it, but as I was coming up-stairs to my room I passed her door and she was turning something around and around in her hand by the light. As soon as she saw me she dropped it into a box quick as a flash and shut the door, so then I went to my room, took off my shoes and ran up here to tell you."

"Oh, Jimmy, could you really see that it was the ring?"

"Looked mightily like something of the kind. And why did she start and look so confused and shut her door so quick?"

"But she would hardly be so mean. She may have just picked it up; it might have caught in something

she had on ; such things do happen. If it is my ring she probably has just found it and means to give it to me in the morning."

"Humph ! She'd better. If she doesn't produce it by the time we are at the breakfast table I will have something to say. I'm not a baby any longer, and I guess I've got the courage to speak my mind. I'm getting tired of being badgered by women folks, anyway."

"Now, Jimmy, do I badger ?"

"Oh, well, you're not a woman folk, not quite yet ; besides you'd never do it, anyhow. If that ring is above ground we'll get it ; you'll see." And Jimmy, after an exchange of good-nights, stole out again.

The boy was as good as his word the next morning at breakfast for, turning to his father, he said : "Did you hear about Kath's ring ?"

"Her ring ? What ring ?" asked Mr. Wyatt.

"The one with a blue stone in it that Judy Falkner gave her. She took it off last evening in the kitchen and we've searched high and low for it, but it isn't to be found. What do you think we'd better do about it ?"

"Ah-h, yes, I remember you showed me the ring, Kathleen ; quite a handsome one as I remember. Relate the circumstances of the loss."

Kathleen gave an account of the facts as she knew them, receiving the reply, "We have no robbers in the

house, and we will set aside the possibility of its having been purloined, unless some outsider came into the kitchen during your absence from it. Do you know of any person being in the kitchen after you left it, or, as I should be more exact, in the interim of your leaving and returning?" Mr. Wyatt asked the question with the air of one conducting a trial at court in which Kathleen was the witness.

"I think no one but Aunt Maria," the girl testified; "she came in just as I went out to do something for Auntie."

"You saw nothing of the ring, of course, Maria," Mr. Wyatt addressed his sister, "or rather, to put the question more directly, did you see anything of the ring? I ask merely that we may carry on the investigation from point to point and thus trace the events in their order. This is my only reason for pressing the question which I request you to answer."

Jimmy gave his cousin a kick under the table as his aunt answered: "I did see it, and thinking to teach Kathleen a lesson, to show her how careless she was in leaving valuables around like that, I took possession of it, and have it safe."

"It was because I wanted to be careful that I took it off," began Kathleen.

But she was stopped by Aunt Maria. "No com-

ments from you, if you please. As I was saying, James, until I was pertly interrupted, I took possession of the ring with the intention of handing it over to you and letting you judge whether a girl in Kathleen's position should be wearing articles of jewelry above her station."

"It didn't cost her anything, father," put in Jimmy, "and I don't see why she hasn't a perfect right to wear what was a free gift if you and mother allow her to."

Mr. Wyatt nodded judicially. "No doubt, Maria, you were quite sincere in your zeal," he resumed the conversation with his sister, "but now that the lesson has been given you may place the ring in my hands, allowing me to use my discretion in returning it."

Aunt Maria could do no more than produce the ring and give it over to her brother, who held it openly in his palm, puffing out his cheeks and pursing up his lips as he bade Kathleen approach. "Here is the object of your search," he said. "You have our permission to retain it, but in the future be more careful of it." He dropped it into Kathleen's outstretched hand with the mien of one who had just purchased and bestowed upon her a gift, but she was too glad to get back her treasure to criticise the manner of obtaining it, and went off to her work telling herself that, dish-water or no dish-water, the ring should never again leave her.

She would make a little bag for it and wear it around her neck when she was doing housework.

So passed off this incident, but it produced the effect of making Mrs. Stebbins more hard toward Kathleen, and of making Mrs. Wyatt gentler in proportion. As for Jimmy, he grew more masterful, more independent of speech and more ready to argue. "I'm through with apron strings," he told his cousin. "I don't mean that I'm going to try to boss the whole shebang, but I guess I'm old enough to have some rights, and I'm going to have 'em, Aunt Maria or not. I'm willing to mind father and mother, but I won't stand for being brought up short for every little trifle as if I were about four years old, and that's the way it's been ever since Aunt Maria came; I wish she'd go home and stay there." Thus did Jimmy speak his mind.

"I wouldn't mind so much," returned Kathleen, "if she didn't get up every morning with the determination of, as she says, accomplishing something. When there isn't anything else to accomplish she insists upon taking down all the bedsteads and switching around all the furniture into different places to see how it will look. I'm trying mighty hard to follow our Camp-Fire rules and they help a lot, but I don't suppose I shall ever be the saint Aunt Maria expects me to be," returned Kathleen.

"No matter how much of a saint you were, she wouldn't admit it," remarked Jimmy with a perspicuity which Kathleen did not give him credit for. "Never you mind, Kath; when I grow up you shall come and live with me. I'll not allow my wife to pick at you."

Kathleen laughed. The idea of Jimmy with a wife was too absurd, but that he should be looking forward to such a possession showed how fast he was outgrowing childhood.

The scheme of a new library was unfolded to the Hovey girls at the first opportunity, and they were as enthusiastic as any one could wish.

"We have something to tell you, too," said Ray. "Did you know that the boys are so impressed by what you did in the way of making over your parlor that they are planning to furbish up the schoolhouse? If they can get anything out of the trustees they will; they are going to try first, but if they can't then they will do the best they can without. We will all pitch in and help, and we are going to see if we can't turn that desolate looking place into something real nice and cheerful. We are going to get dear Miss Bolton to give us ideas. Every one will do what he or she can. The bigger boys have formed a committee to wait upon the trustees. Isn't it interesting?"

"It is," returned Kathleen with a sigh, "and to think

I can't be in it, for I am no longer a pupil of the school."

"Oh, but you may be again. Who knows?" said the cheerful Ray. "Besides, it is the school in your town, and you have as much right to help with the improvements as any one."

"I'd like to have a hand in it, but I can say this much: I don't believe the trustees will do one blessed thing. Uncle James is one of them, you know, and I can tell you he won't give his sanction to the spending of a cent. He will say it is good enough. Oh, I have heard his opinion. He will say that we can learn just as well in an unpainted schoolhouse as in a freshly painted one, and that all this nonsense about fussing up a place like that is just foolishness and waste of time." Kathleen unconsciously imitated her uncle's manner of speech and Ray laughed.

"Well," Margaret joined in, "he isn't the whole board, and even if he and the others refuse to put any money in the scheme it won't prevent the rest of us from doing what we can."

"Are you going to help, Margaret?" questioned Kathleen.

"Certainly I am. It was where I went to school, and I am as much interested as any one."

"I am afraid I shall not have much time or anything

else to give," said Kathleen. "I spent my all upon the parlor, and I am so busy at home that I haven't much chance to earn anything more. Since Aunt Maria came I am busier than ever, for she has persuaded Aunt Susan that I should do the family sewing when I am not doing other things."

No one made any comment. There was really nothing to say. If the intention was to train Kathleen into as hustling and thoroughgoing a housekeeper as either Mrs. Wyatt or Aunt Maria it was evident that there would be little time for outside adventures of any kind.

"The boys will be delighted with that idea of a library." Margaret returned to this subject. "It could be started in the school, and if it grows, who knows but that in time we could have a building? What a splendid addition to the town it would be. Drowsy little old Brightwood is waking up, and perhaps some day will be worthy of its name. As Miss Bolton says a few enterprising, wide-awake young people can do more for a town than a whole army of prosy, hard-headed old fellows who have no public spirit."

Kathleen went home without saying a word about the plans she and Judy had made to improve her room, for as she listened to the talk about other improvements she made up her mind that her own must be sacrificed. What was the use, anyhow? The room

would soon be too cold for her to sit in, and if Aunt Maria should suddenly make up her mind to end her visit, then and there Kathleen could return to her former quarters, so she decided that whatever she had on hand she would offer for the benefit of the schoolhouse. It was not much, but it would help out. So as she walked home she saw the vision of a pretty, cozy room fade entirely out of sight, and in its place arose an improved schoolhouse.

She heard voices in the parlor as she entered, her uncle's rising pompously, younger ones in eager argument. The committee were there to make their plea. To a man of Mr. Wyatt's make-up it was a pleasurable occasion. Nothing pleased him more than to show authority. He was a person who was always eager to be in evidence, to attract attention to himself. If he could do it in no other way than by sneezing, coughing, walking across the floor, he must be conspicuous. As he walked down the street he looked around to see who was observing him; if he entered church he did so with an air of saying, "Behold James Wyatt." There was nothing about him to invite such notice, but, nevertheless, as in minds of like calibre, he imagined a stupendous importance.

Kathleen heard his bombastic tones as he saw the boys to the door. "My young friends, I do not—ah,

agree with you. The money could be expended more wisely. You exaggerate the condition of things. Your education does not require a wasteful expenditure. I am opposed to the plan you suggest, absolutely opposed. Why, in my day, we would have thought ourselves well off, yes, very well off with such a schoolhouse as yours. Your arguments have no weight at all. Good-evening." The door closed and Kathleen heard her uncle marching up and down the dining-room as he expatiated upon the interview. She did not look to see, but she had no difficulty in bringing the picture before her. She knew by his pompous tones that he trod majestically, head thrown back, thumbs in waistcoat, chest swelled out. From his manner one would think that nothing less than a delegation from a foreign country had waited upon him, and he was as pleased at having sent them off with their request ungranted as if he had worsted the Kaiser himself.

However, she heard the next day that although the trustees, in the main, had refused to appropriate anything from the school funds toward the enterprise, that several of them as individuals approved the plan and had promised contributions, and the work was to begin at once.

"The boys are going to paint the schoolhouse itself, the first thing," Ray told her. "They have nearly

enough money promised for the paint, and then we are going to do something with the inside. We have planned a regular jollification when we meet together to rub up the furniture, put plants in the windows, and do something to the floor. You must come, Kath."

"I will if I can," returned Kathleen, feeling quite sure that she would not be permitted to do so. The fact that the undertaking had been carried on directly in opposition to his expressed opinion would be sufficient reason for Mr. Wyatt to forbid either Jimmy or Kathleen to have anything to do with the movement.

Jimmy brought a grievance to Kathleen that night when she had gone up to her room. "I don't see why father makes all this fuss about nothing," he began. "Just because he doesn't approve is no reason why I shouldn't. It isn't taking any money out of his pocket. He says that what was good enough for him ought to be good enough for me, but that's no reason. All the fellows are going to help, and they will think I am a mut if I sneak out of it. I don't care what father says, I mean to do what I can, and I'm going to be on hand the day they fix up the inside. The girls and fellows are going to bring things to eat and are going to have a regular bang up time." Jimmy thrust his feet out in front of him, and sat with his hands in his pockets, the very picture of rebellious discontent.

"I don't expect to take any part in it," Kathleen told him calmly.

"You don't? I say, Kath, that's a downright shame. Let's both go anyway. We can't get more than a scolding and perhaps be given nothing but bread and water for a meal or two. I can stand it if you can. I'm tired of being ordered not to do this, and of being told I can't have that, perfectly simple reasonable things, and it's getting worse since Aunt Maria came. You and I are too old to be treated like infants." Jimmy kicked the old chest savagely.

"Poor Jimmy," said Kathleen sympathetically. "It is rather hard, but I suppose we should be obedient while we are dependent on your parents; we mustn't get too uppish. When are they going to start in on the work, and when are they going to jollify?"

"The boys have begun already to paint. Say, Kath, they thought it was fine of you to send that can of paint. They changed it for green so as to use it on the shutters. I haven't got nothin' to give." Jimmy cared less for the correctness of his English than for some other things in life. "They're going to wait till Saturday to do the inside. They think they can do the painting one Saturday and the fixin' up the next."

"Maybe by that time your father will come to another way of thinking, and will let you go."

"Trust him," exclaimed Jimmy scornfully. "He wouldn't change his mind, no, not for king nor tinker; you know father."

"You like your teacher this year, don't you, Jimmy?" said Kathleen after a moment's thought.

"He is a Jim dandy. Ever so much better than old Stokes that we had last year."

"He is a great friend of Fred Furnival's, isn't he? I think some one told me they were at college together."

"Yes, and I believe it was Mr. Furnival who got him for us."

Kathleen smiled. "Your father would say that Mr. Furnival used his influence with the trustees to engage him."

"I don't care how you put it. All I know is that Mr. Furnival got him, and I'm glad he did."

"Then, Jimmy boy, maybe we can manage it. I think I see us going to the jollifying."

"What you got up your sleeve now?"

"I'll tell you when I know myself. It is just a little twinkle of a possibility that I see. You shall know later."

"You're a good old girl, Kath," returned Jimmy. "I'm glad you're my cousin." And Jimmy clattered off to his room, leaving Kathleen to weave a new plan.

CHAPTER XIX

BURYING THE HATCHET

IT was not till Saturday that Kathleen had a chance to make the first effort toward carrying out her plan, and then fortune favored her. She had hoped that Ray or Tilda would run in for a moment, but since the arrival of Aunt Maria the girls had not come so often, rather dreading Aunt Maria's cold gaze and forbidding manner. Jimmy was nowhere about and so it was Kathleen who was sent on the errand which took her to the other end of the village. She was glad enough to be out in the open air on this clear November day, and enjoyed rustling the leaves under her feet as she went down the long village street. All morning she had been busy in the house, and had dreaded the afternoon which usually meant a long stretch of sewing, for a pile of towels, sheets and table-cloths had been given her to hem and a most irksome task she found it. Instead it was delightful to be free, to take long breaths, to look toward the mountains, purple under the autumn sky.

On her way home she stopped at the schoolhouse,

surely this much grace might be permitted her. The building shining in its fresh coat of white and green looked much more inviting than when the girl had last seen it. From it issued sounds of happy talk and merry laughter. Kathleen stood for a moment just inside the door before any one saw her. Half a dozen girls were busy at work washing the windows; others were rubbing off the desks. High on a ladder stood Sig Eckert painting the frame of the door, while some of the rest were at work upon the surbase.

Tilda was the first to catch sight of the newcomer. "Kathleen!" she cried. "Oh, what luck! Come right in. Have you come to help us?"

At sound of her exclamation Sig Eckert turned, missed his footing, and came slipping down the ladder, his bucket of paint with him, and presently he lay on the floor, in a puddle of white paint, too surprised to move.

A shout went up as he gathered himself into a sitting posture and looked around dazedly, the white paint dripping from hair, face and clothing. "What bust?" he asked.

"I didn't see anything but Kathleen, and she didn't exactly burst; she merely came," said Tilda, choking with laughter. "Oh, Sig, you look so funny. You aren't hurt, are you?"

"No, but I never had such a surprise. I wish somebody would come scrape me off, and help to ladle up this paint; it is all soaking into the floor. We can't have such a wanton waste of good material."

Two or three rushed to help him out of his predicament, and while they were doing it, Kathleen bore Ray off to a corner. "I want to talk to you," she said, "and I have only a minute. When do you expect Miss Bolton again?"

"This very afternoon, if Judy can bring her. She wrote that she was just crazy to see how we were getting along with the schoolhouse. The boys' room is all done except the floor; some of the boys are in there now, and we want to get most of this done before night. Mr. Munroe is helping the boys; he is so very nice, Kath, and really Miss Iverson takes ever so much more interest than she used to. I think Miss Bolton may be thanked for that; we girls like her very much better this year. I wish you could stay, Kathleen; we are having such fun."

"I'd love to, but I mustn't."

"Ah, now, Kathleen, don't go," cried one and another as she turned toward the door. "Come on and help us."

"Sure you want me?" Kathleen asked with a smile for the jolly group.

"Sure," responded Billy Bodine, ceasing for a moment from his vigorous rubbing of Sig's head from which he was trying to get the paint.

"I'm afraid you boys will play some trick on me, remembering days of yore."

"No, we won't; we promise. We've buried the hatchet. I say, boys, why don't we bury the hatchet?" Sig rose to his feet. "It would be good sport when we celebrate. We're making common cause these days, and we certainly owe a lot to the Camp-Fire Girls, so I say we have a ceremonious burial of the hatchet next Saturday."

"Second the motion," cried Billy Bodine, flourishing the towel with which he had been removing the paint. "We'll plan it all out, Sig, before the time comes. You'll be here, Kathleen, won't you?"

"I don't know; it doesn't look so now, but maybe we can manage it, Jimmy and I; we want to immensely."

"We know that. Old Jim is awfully cut up about it, but we are going to keep on hoping that you'll both be here."

"Aren't you going to stay now?" Anna Metz came up and asked eagerly. "Oh, do, Kathleen; it is so much more fun when you are along."

"Afraid I can't this time. I am just aching to help

you, but I must get back or get a scolding. I don't exactly mind the scolding, but I have no right to disobey orders."

"That's all right, Kath," cried Sig, still engaged in removing paint. "You're the stuff, and we aren't going to say a word, but you know we all wish you were one of us again."

Kathleen nodded. She could not trust herself to say very much just then. All this hearty good-will was very precious after the constant criticism she received at home.

"Isn't it good news about the library?" said Sig. "Of course you've heard the latest news."

"No, indeed. What is it?"

"You haven't heard what Mr. Furnival is going to do? He has offered to put up shelves for us, and to look over his library and send us what books he can spare. Then that Miss Falkner has been busy with her friends and has a lot more books to send, and has money subscribed to buy more. How's that for a beginning?"

"And I never heard of it," cried Kathleen, feeling a little aggrieved.

"Oh, we all know it was you and Miss Judy Falkner that started the idea, you Camp-Fire Girls," said Billy.

"Maybe Judy wanted to keep it as a secret, and means to tell you her very self this afternoon when she comes," said Ray.

"Perhaps that is just it." Kathleen felt more comfortable about it. "It certainly is great news and I'd love to stay and talk about it, but I must tear myself away from this delightful society. Good-bye, everybody." And Kathleen was off.

She had scarcely reached home when Judy whirled in upon her. She had hardly waited for an answer to her question: "Is Kathleen at home, and may I go right up?" but mounted the stairs she had learned to know. She found her friend with a worsted shawl wound around her trying to keep warm in the chilly room. "Why, you dear thing," cried Judy, "why don't you have a fire?"

"Why don't I?" returned Kathleen giving her a hug. "Because, my dear darling, if I were to kindle a fire in the middle of this room it would be very liable to extend to an alarming degree, and we have had conflagrations enough in this house. I suppose you perceive that there is no fireplace."

"Oh, dear, no, I hadn't noticed it." Judy looked around in a troubled way. "You don't mean to say you can never have a fire? Why, how are you to keep warm?"

"In the way my foremothers did, I suppose, whatever way that was."

"But, Kathleen, it will never do."

"What are we going to do about it, my child?"

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know."

"Then don't let's bother. You notice, Judy dear, that I haven't been seeking beauty for this room, but I simply couldn't. In the first place it is cold and shivery, and then I gave my paint for the common good; it was all I could do, and then I thought maybe Aunt Maria will go pretty soon and I shall be back in my old room."

"Is there any hope of that?"

"Can't tell. She doesn't deign to inform me of her plans."

"Isn't she a sour-visaged somebody? I saw her as I came in. Dear me, but it must be a trial to live in the house with such an uncompromising individual."

"Oh, she can smile, although she doesn't often favor me. Auntie notices it, for she often stands between me and the enemy, and is really much kinder to me since she can get around again—but I don't suppose anything I could ever do would make Aunt Maria get over her prejudice, and I think she would like nothing better than to see me out of the house altogether. She always reminds me of that line of the old hymn 'Vindic-

tive Justice stood in view,' which used to scare me so when I was a child. But, dear me, I must not talk about her or I shall feel vinegary, too."

"And to think of what an atmosphere of sunshine I live in. I am never scolded, even if I am not always approved. The worst that mamma does is to look injured and to go about in a martyr-like manner, whereas father simply looks solemn and absorbed when I air what he calls my socialistic principles. He doesn't disapprove as much as he did, however, since he sees how much happier and better I am. He realizes that I am not the clinging vine sort and that neither am I one who thrives upon a diet of rose-leaves and wrappings of cotton wool. Sometimes I think dear old Dad would rather like to make an outdoor comrade of me, and maybe we shall swing around to that yet. As he grows less uncompromising I find I grow so, and I am beginning to see that my parents have their side too, that it must be something of a trial to them to have a daughter who doesn't want to do the things which seem so very desirable to them. I am trying to be a little more flexible, and perhaps we shall, some day, agree upon more questions than we do now. I don't pour out my heart this way to every one, Kathleen, but somehow I can't help being confidential with you. Now let us talk of something more delightful."

"Do you mean the library? Isn't it wonderful? I haven't heard all."

"I was afraid some one had been stealing my secret, and I wanted to tell you myself that the Muskoday Camp-Fire has collected a fund of twenty-five dollars for new books, and each one pledges herself to give at least one book a year as long as she shall be a Camp-Fire Girl. So much for our efforts. Now the Furnivals have a sort of feeling that you Ohuanuáh-Nahs are their special interest and they are going to put up shelves as you need them in the school, and will contribute more books. Isn't it a fine start, Kathleen?"

"It surely is, and, you blessed girl, it is all due to you."

"Not to me alone, please. Think how many others have a share in it. I am tremendously pleased of course, but you must give Miss Keene credit for putting the idea before the Furnivals. I am going over there to spend Sunday, Kathleen. Mrs. Furnival brought Miss Bolton and me over and will pick me up as she comes back. I do wish you could come over tomorrow. Don't you believe you could?"

Kathleen shook her head. "I don't know."

"I am going to beg for you."

"I'd love to see Mrs. Furnival for I want to see if she can help me manage any way so that Jimmy and I

can go next Saturday to the schoolhouse. Poor Jimmy has set his heart on it, and I would love to go, but I am getting used to not doing things, so it will not be so hard on me."

"What is the reason you can't go, and why is Jimmy left out?"

"He isn't left out, but Uncle James objects because he didn't favor the improvements in the first place and doesn't want any one of the family to countenance them by going or helping."

"I see. Well, dear girl, we must see what can be done. Oh, I do wish you could go back with us this evening and stay. Mrs. Furnival would love to have you."

This dazzling prospect was not to materialize, but Judy did win a reluctant consent to Kathleen's going to dine the next day with her friends, and considered that so much was a concession she had not dared to hope for. If Mrs. Furnival herself had not added her entreaties to Judy's, probably the request would have been denied.

The upshot of the matter was that there was a long conference at the Furnivals about the entertainment at the schoolhouse; at the last Mr. Furnival was invited to join, and it was he who proposed a plan which unfolded not only present but future possibilities.

"What we want to do," said Mr. Furnival, "is to interest not only Mr. Wyatt, but all the trustees. We will ignore the improvements you young people have been making, so far as the trustees are concerned, and will tell them that we want to celebrate the inauguration of a library for the town of Brightwood. We will have some speeches in the schoolhouse, invite the trustees and their families, and then afterward if you young folks want to have a merrymaking as a sort of appendix, why there should be no objection. You can go to the schoolhouse beforehand and do your decorating, ostensibly for the meeting, and we'll make each trustee feel that he is the beginning of a Carnegie, so nobody's toes will be trod upon, and there will be a hatchet burying all around."

"Oh, Mr. Furnival, you have exactly the right plan," cried Judy. "How glad I am that we asked your advice. It will smooth out everything, and make everybody feel so complacent and comfortable. You shall have the Falkner prize for the promotion of Peace." She laughingly dived into her work-bag which stood upon the table, produced the label from a spool of crochet cotton, strung it upon a length of the cotton and hung it around his neck. "There," she exclaimed, "in the name of Peace I decorate you."

Nothing in the world could have given Mr. Wyatt

more satisfaction than the invitation, a personal note from Mr. Furnival himself, and when it was suggested that he be one of those to address the meeting one would have thought that the entire movement was one of his own originating, and that the town of Brightwood should consider him its everlasting benefactor. It was surprising to see how many times he considered it necessary to clear his throat, to pace the floor, to harangue his assembled family that day. Would he deny Kathleen and Jimmy the joy of attending the ceremonies when he was to speak? Not a bit of it. They were almost commanded to go, and every obstacle which stood in the way of his wife's and his sister's attendance was removed, so the pompous little man could have a larger audience.

Well, it certainly was a great day. The trustees, solemnly important, occupied the platform, in company with the two teachers and "our distinguished guest," Mr. Furnival. There were speeches, a clear, concise, elevating one from Mr. Furnival, a flowery, discursive, lengthy one from Mr. Wyatt, a crisp, humorous, but earnest one from Mr. Munroe, and others not worth mentioning. There was singing by the pupils, and a benediction from the minister, so it may be said that the library was set fairly on its feet with due approval.

After all was over the trustees marched in sedate

procession around the two rooms, viewing the improvements, and even if James Wyatt did not openly voice his endorsement he was of the party and could not be said to condemn. How could he, indeed, when there was nothing to disapprove? Clean paint, shining desks, polished floors, flowers blooming in windows, appropriate pictures on walls, book shelves in place, and displaying as many as a hundred books.

Before these last Judy and Kathleen lingered that Kathleen might be shown the neat labels already pasted in the books donated by the Muskoday Camp-Fire Girls. The books were yet to be catalogued, and this Margaret had offered to do.

"As long as Uncle James has extolled the library in such unmistakable terms," said Kathleen, "he can scarcely forbid my taking books from it. What a master-stroke that was of Mr. Furnival's. I have to smile when I think how well he read Uncle's character."

"Come on, girls, come on," Tilda interrupted them. "The days are short and the coach is waiting."

"The coach?" Judy looked puzzled.

Tilda laughed. "Haven't you heard? We are all going out to the pond to have some eats and to bury the hatchet. It is a straw ride, a picnic, and a peace pow-wow combined. Isn't it lucky that we have such a lovely Indian summer day? Come on."

Leaving the books for another time, the two girls followed Tilda to the road where a great wagon filled with straw stood. It was filled with boys and girls, Mr. Munroe and Margaret Hovey being the eldest members of the party. Miss Ivison had declined to go, on the plea of having to remain at the school while any of the visitors lingered.

"It is my private opinion that she didn't want to come," Tilda whispered to Kathleen. "She thought it would be beneath her dignity to join a set of wild Indians like us, but Mr. Munroe is a regular sport, and Margaret is chaperon enough for us."

A jolly, jolting ride it was, beguiled by songs and joking, nonsensical talk, such as care-free boys and girls alone can enjoy. When the shores of the pond were reached the boys stood up in the wagon and gave a wild whoop of joy. Then Sig cried out, "Three cheers for the Camp-Fire Girls!"

Then there were three cheers for the Muskoday Camp, for the Ohuanuáh-Nah, for Mr. Furnival, for the Furnival family, for Judy Falkner, for every one and everything remotely connected with the occasion, winding up with the pond and the hatchet.

Such a rollicking, joyous crowd it was that at first there seemed no method in their proceedings. The boys raced up hill and down again, uttering

shrill whoops; the girls danced wildly around among the fallen leaves and shouted gay speeches to the boys.

At last Mr. Munroe, cupping his hands around his mouth, called, "If you boys don't get together and make a fire we shall have no time to eat."

This brought the boys down the bank with a wild dash and soon the fire was blazing brightly, the baskets opened and the meal set forth. By the time it was over the wild spirits had subsided, and the company was ready to sit in a circle around the fire to wait for what should come next.

It was Sig with a long pipe who again started up peals of laughter. "This is the pipe of peace," he announced, "and every one is compelled to take a whiff of it."

"Oh, Sig, girls and all?" Ray's voice rose in protest.

"Girls and all," he declared. "It won't hurt you to take one little bit of a whiff; it isn't tobacco, only corn husks. You must all be very solemn, for we want this to be an impressive ceremony."

Each one tried to present as composed a countenance as possible, but there had to be chuckles on the part of the boys and titters on the part of the girls, yet the pipe was accepted in pretty good fashion as it was passed around. One or two of the girls made a face

of disgust as she handed it to her neighbor and a few choked or coughed, but take it all in all they did fairly well.

Then Billy Bodine, with a blanket from the wagon wrapped around him, gave what he called a pow-wow in as near an approach to a Hiawatha style as he could summon. It was not a bad imitation, for Billy was clever and had been thinking about it for some time. After it was over he sat down solemnly and enjoined silence which was pretty hard to keep, and did not last very long.

The final act was the burying of the hatchet. Sig, the tallest lad, marched ahead with the hatchet over his shoulder; the rest followed in procession to the other side of the pond where after due ceremony the hatchet was imbedded in the earth, and the procession wound its way back to the fire.

By this time the shadows of the short November afternoon were gathering and after putting out the last vestige of fire they scrambled back into the wagon, rousing the echoes as they went along the rough road down the mountainside, Sig sharing the honors of driver with Mr. Munroe. And so they clattered up the long street and stopped before the schoolhouse door, a united band.

"I never had more fun in my life," declared Judy

enthusiastically. "I wish I lived in a village near a mountain."

"Not Brightwood, surely," responded Kathleen.

"Why not? Brightwood is improving.

' We know a little what it is
But who knows what it may be ? ' "

she finished by paraphrasing.

"I'd rather live at Weston," Kathleen expressed her preference.

"Oh, it isn't half so interesting, all new, orderly summer homes with neat grounds and that sort of thing. The interesting part of Brightwood is that it is capable of improvement and Weston isn't. All the improvements were there to begin with, not that it isn't pretty enough, and beautifully situated, but Brightwood is already showing its possibilities by what you Camp-Fire Girls have been the means of starting. In ten years every one will be saying: What a pretty town."

"That sounds mighty encouraging," returned Kathleen. "What do you expect to see at the end of ten years? Let us see how your prophetic eye is working."

"I expect to see a fine new library building for one thing. It is to be on that lot opposite the schoolhouse, and it will have a garden in front of it; so will the

schoolhouse, but there will be a better building. There will be trees each side the street all the way out, and gardens in front of every house. Cyrus Prince will have a new store, although I am afraid in looks it will be scarcely better than the one he has, and not half so picturesque. Some of the old houses will be remodeled or added to, and there will be little green triangles and squares where now are vacant lots. Kathleen Gilman will not be living where she does."

"Where will she be?"

"Don't ask me; I can't see that far. She may not be in Brightwood at all."

"She may not be," returned Kathleen gravely; "you are quite right about that. She may be struggling to earn her living in the city."

"If she is she will have plenty of friends to give her a helping land."

"She may not have her friend, Judy Falkner."

"Why not?"

"She, too, may have changed her place of abode; she may be living in Weston."

Judy laughed a little consciously and colored slightly, then recovering herself she said: "I wish I could persuade papa to build a home at Weston; I should like nothing better, but I am afraid poor mamma would perish without the excitements of the city."

"I suppose the Furnivals will soon be closing their house."

"I think they will stay as long as possible. Mrs. Furnival says she wouldn't mind staying all winter, but it is pretty hard on the two men to come back and forth in cold weather, and so I suppose they will leave before Christmas."

Kathleen drew a long sigh. "Do you make much of Christmas, Judy?"

"Why, of course. Don't you? I think it is a perfectly lovely time."

"No, we don't make much of it," returned Kathleen. "My uncle and aunt don't believe in giving presents or decorating the house or doing any of those things. We have something extra for dinner, mince pie or something, and we go to church. That is really the best part of the day. I get most of my Christmas at the Hoveys', for I am allowed to spend the evening there."

"You poor dear. I wish I could have you with me. We would show you what a Christmas can really be. Oh, Kathleen ——" She paused abruptly.

"Why that 'Oh, Kathleen'?" asked the other.

"Oh, nothing, at least I won't explain now; perhaps I can later. I can't bear to have you spend a doleful Christmas with Aunt Maria."

Kathleen laughed. "If I had to spend it with Aunt Maria it might well be doleful, but perhaps she won't be here."

"Let us fervently hope so. Before Christmas comes Thanksgiving, and before that, what do you think, Kathleen?"

"I cannot imagine."

"I have saved this to tell you the last thing, so as to give you something pleasant to look forward to. We are going to have a final meeting of the Muskodays on the mountain, and the Ohuanuáh-Nah girls are to be our guests. Miss Keene and Miss Bertie Bolton are planning it all out and it is going to be great. We are hoping this lovely Indian summer weather will last so we can have it next Saturday, the last outdoor meet of the year. You can surely come, Kathleen," Judy added anxiously seeing that Kathleen looked dubious.

"I hope so. If Aunt Maria has anything to do with it I shall not, but maybe if I can get Auntie's ear when she is not by, I can win her consent. There is one thing about Auntie; if she promises a thing she doesn't fail you whatever Aunt Maria may say or do."

"That's good. I shall count on you. I see the Furnivals' car coming, so I must go, but this is only au revoir till next Saturday."

She found both Mr. and Mrs. Furnival waiting alone

for her in the parlor. Mr. Furnival was looking around interestedly. "Well," said he, "this room is a surprise. I should hardly have suspected our friend James Wyatt of having such in his home. Why, it is the prettiest place in town."

"Ah," exclaimed Judy, "you needn't hold either Mr. or Mrs. Wyatt accountable. It is every bit Kathleen. She planned it all and carried it out. Oh, you don't know that girl."

"She certainly has excellent taste. Just see how she has managed that old stone jar of chrysanthemums. They are a wonderful touch of color. Why, the girl could be an interior decorator if she has so much ability with practically no training."

"That is just what she should be," agreed Mrs. Furnival. "I gather, Judy, that she is none too happy in her home."

"No, poor dear, she isn't. Could you be, with James Wyatt as a house-mate?" she asked in a whisper.

Mr. Furnival laughed and Mrs. Furnival shook her head warningly. "Walls have ears, my dear," she said.

"But that is an idea," Judy went on, "and I'd be glad enough to help her carry it out, Mrs. Furnival, but she is a proud piece, and I don't know whether she would let me."

"I like her independence," Mrs. Furnival remarked, "but if she could only be helped to help herself it would be a fine thing."

Mr. Furnival nodded thoughtfully. "We'll have to talk it over some day," he said. "Come, the dark will catch us before we get home." They went out but a seed had been dropped which should take root and flourish in days to come.

CHAPTER XX

DARKEST BEFORE DAY

IT was after Aunt Maria Stebbins had been specially disagreeable to Kathleen that the girl noticed a gentler expression in her Aunt Susan's face and she seized the psychological moment to ask consent to go to the Camp-Fire meeting on the mountain. "It's the last one of the season," she said pleadingly and with a wistful look in her eyes.

Mrs. Wyatt took note of the girl's pallor, and of her slim figure. "I declare, Kathleen," she said, "I do believe you grow an inch a day, and you are as thin as a rail; you'd better be taking a tonic. I will make up some boneset tea for you."

Kathleen made a wry face. "Oh, please don't; that is such horrid bitter herby stuff. I am well enough."

"Well, maybe something else might do, but you must have something. Your eyes take up nearly all your face. I don't notice that you have a cough, so I reckon it is just that you grow so fast. I don't want you down sick on our hands; we've had enough of that with my being laid up for weeks. What's this about Camp-Fire meetings?"

"The girls are coming over from the city and have asked our Camp-Fire to be their guests at this last outdoor meeting of the year. Judy said they had planned some extra fine doings."

"When is it to be?"

"Next Saturday."

"Well, I don't know; it is a pretty busy day and you were off all last Saturday."

"I'll get up real early and do anything you want me to," Kathleen promised eagerly.

"Two Saturdays running? I don't know what your uncle will say."

"But this is the very last time. I won't ask to go again."

"I'm not so sure you won't. Well, if Maria doesn't take it into her head to do some elaborate piece of cooking, I guess you can go, and even if she does mess up a great pile of kitchen things I am equal to washing them up, now that I can get around so much better."

"Oh, thank you, Auntie!" Kathleen's eyes brightened and she gave the unyielding figure a hug.

"There, there, don't act in that foolish way," expostulated Mrs. Wyatt. "You never will learn to control yourself. One would think you were about six instead of sixteen."

"But I do want to show my gratitude to you," replied Kathleen crestfallen.

"Then take some other way of doing it. Try to behave so your Aunt Maria will not be forever finding fault."

"Don't you suppose she would do it no matter how I behaved?" said Kathleen.

"Well, I don't know. She's pretty exacting when it comes to other people's children, but I think it might be just as well if you tried to please her."

"I do try; at least I do what you require of me. She—she isn't my aunt, and hasn't any right to order me about like a slave."

"Well, if it comes to that, I suppose she hasn't, but all the same it is just as well you tried to keep peace. She has a great influence over your uncle, being his elder sister, and moreover being a Wyatt, which counts for more in his opinion, and he seems to think he ought to agree with her way of thinking, which nine times out of ten is his way. Now, go along. If Maria comes in and sees you idle she will row you over the coals. I said you could go to your picnic and I'll keep my promise, but you needn't think I have to have my hair rumpled because of it."

Kathleen gave her an eloquent look but she did not attempt a second caress, and did not tarry. It was

enough to have gained the promise which she could count upon being kept. She rushed up to her room to write a note to Judy and give her the glad news. Then she slipped out of the house and over to the Hoveys', knowing they would be eager to hear her report. She found them enthusiastically discussing the important event with Tilda, who had just come in.

"Oh, good, here's Kath," cried Ray. "We've just heard from Miss Bolton, Kath. She and Miss Keene have planned out the loveliest time you ever knew. We've just been telling Tilda and you will want to hear."

"How do you know I will?" asked Kathleen, pretending to look very downcast. "Suppose I can't go; it would only make me envious."

"Oh, Kathleen, don't suggest such a direful thing," Tilda exclaimed. "You simply must go, even if you have to live on bread and water for a month afterward, though they surely wouldn't be so utterly without heart as to command you to stay away."

"Well, no, they couldn't, at least Auntie couldn't," laughed Kathleen, having produced the effect she hoped for. "I am going. Auntie has just promised and what she says goes, in such a case; she was quite lovely about it. I have just written to Judy to tell her."

"Oh, goody good!" cried Ray. "That is the best

news ever. I am so thankful it is settled. Now listen. It is to be a Corn Festival. We are going to celebrate the harvest of corn as the Indians used to do. We are to have lovely johnny cakes baked before the fire, corn flakes, with cream from the Furnivals' farm, and some stuff called polenta; I don't know just what it is, but it sounds good. Oh, yes, we are to begin with corn soup, and we are to have pop-corn somewhere along in the menu. Are there any more corny things, do you remember, Margaret?"

"Corn-fed bacon to go with the johnny cakes. I believe that is all that Miss Bolton mentioned, but she said there might be other things."

"It certainly sounds appetizing," returned Kathleen. "Tell me some more of the plan."

"We are going to play the cornet after we have the corn eat and we are to have cornucopias as favors," put in Tilda with seeming seriousness.

"Tilda, you goose, you know we are not," Grace replied.

Tilda laughed. "I thought I would get a rise out of somebody."

"There are to be recitations in praise of corn;" Margaret took up the tale. "Miss Bolton suggested Sidney Lanier's poem on corn and a part of Hiawatha. Then we are to have a corn stalk drill and at the last

we are to go to the Furnivals' new barn to have an Indian dance and other folk dances. All the Musko-days are to spend the night. We are to take in Miss Bolton, Tilda will take two of the girls, and whoever is left over Mrs. Furnival will provide for. Of course she will have Miss Keene and Judy."

"Alas, that I dare not even suggest taking in a guest," said Kathleen. "I should love to, but never mind, I am to join the fun, and will harbor no grouch."

"Of course we all know what you would do if you could," said Ray comfortingly, "but isn't it the loveliest sort of plan?"

"Perfectly thrilling," cried Kathleen. "I am fairly quivering with anticipation. Oh, how glad, how thankful I am that I can be a Camp-Fire Girl even if I can't be some other things I should like to be."

"I reckon we all feel about that way," said Margaret.

"Don't you hope and pray that this lovely Indian summer weather will last just a few days longer?" said Grace.

"Even if it doesn't, Miss Bolton said we could have the meeting in the new barn, so we shall not have to give it up in any case."

The next day dawned bright and fair. Kathleen

was up long before daylight to draw aside the curtain of her little window and look out upon the new day. There was no sign of sunrise yet, but the mountains were revealed as gray shadowy forms over which a bright star still hung. Kathleen began to dress, looking from time to time from the window, and presently a soft radiance overspread the eastern horizon, and then from it floated up streaks of rose and purple which deepened into violet and carmine and presently rolled up as a curtain to discover the golden globe of the rising sun.

"It is going to be a lovely day," said the girl as she ran down to the kitchen to find her aunt just arrived and beginning preparations for breakfast.

"Well, I wouldn't be too pleased about it," remarked Mrs. Wyatt.

"Why not? I am pleased and how can I help being, when we have been hoping it would keep fair and warm till after the Council Fire?"

"Well, you needn't try to look too happy," Mrs. Wyatt warned her. "There are people in the world that don't enjoy seeing other people have a good time, and I would keep my feelings to myself if I were you." By which remark Kathleen knew that Aunt Maria was to be considered in the matter.

However, she could not keep her joy entirely out of sight, and flew around so briskly, looked so cheerful

and had so many jokes with Jimmy, that finally Aunt Maria did become suspicious and asked acidly, "What is the occasion of this frivolity, Kathleen? When I was a girl I didn't drown the voices of my elders and betters by laughter and chatter."

"I didn't know I was drowning any one's voice," returned Kathleen apologetically.

"Probably not. You don't notice very much that you should. If you were to strive for the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit it would be more credit to one in your position."

Kathleen flushed up, but she bit her lip and made no reply.

"I don't see why she can't be glad that she is going to have a good time," Jimmy blundered in with his remark as he sometimes did when matters went a little too far.

"What good time?" inquired Aunt Maria sharply.

"Why, the Camp-Fire meeting on the mountain Saturday," Jimmy told her.

Aunt Maria cast one wrathful glance at Kathleen and turned to her sister-in-law. "You don't mean to say," she began, "that you are going to allow this girl to go gadding again on Saturday, the busiest day in the week?"

"I promised Kathleen she should go to her Camp-

Fire meeting; it is the last one of the year," Mrs. Wyatt replied.

Aunt Maria raised her hands and shook her head. "You are utterly ruining her with your coddling. It is high time she should be earning her own living instead of thinking she is a lily of the field like her silly mother. Let her find out what it is to be without a home and then she may learn to appreciate all the benefits that have been showered upon her. She ought to get a place of some kind and not hang on here eating the bread of idleness, a great grown girl like her. Let her try to get something to do and not depend upon my poor brother who has his own family to think of."

"If I did get anything to do," retorted Kathleen goaded beyond endurance, especially on account of the allusion to her mother, "I should be allowed half holiday on Saturday and have my Sundays as well. Besides I could choose the kind of people I lived with."

Aunt Maria fairly trembled with rage. "You poor little miserable charity creature," she cried, "to answer back to me—to me. Where would you be but for my brother? Eating your meals in an orphan asylum, wearing the kind of clothes suitable for such as you, and looking forward to—what? . I should like to know."

"If you can tell me that I am looking forward to any very joyful future here I'd like to know it," returned Kathleen.

"That will do, Kathleen." Her aunt spoke sharply. "Go to your room. Such an exhibition of temper is very wrong."

"Whose?" inquired Kathleen over her shoulder as she marched from the room. She was shaking with excitement. She could not, would not stay under the same roof with Mrs. Maria Stebbins, no, not another night. She climbed the stairs to her room, hesitated a few moments, then slipped out of the house and over to the Hoveys'. "Will you let me come in a little while?" she asked Ray whom she met at the side door to which she went.

Ray looked at the trembling lips and tear-stained face. "Why, Kath, why, Kathleen!" she said. "Come in? Of course you may. You know there isn't an hour in the day when you are not welcome. Has — Is anything the matter?"

Kathleen sat down on the first chair which offered and began weeping forlornly. Ray beckoned to her mother who came and put her arm around the girl's bowed figure.

"There, there," she said, "tell Mother Hovey all about it."

"I came over," Kathleen managed to sob out, "to ask you what I'd better do. I can't stay in the same house with Mrs. Stebbins another day. She has been twitting me with not earning my living. She hammers at me from morning until night. I can't stand it. I can't, I can't. When she says cruel things about my lovely mother that is more than I can or will endure." By this time Kathleen had dried her eyes and was speaking passionately.

Mrs. Hovey drew up a chair by the girl's side, and took the shaking cold fingers into the clasp of her large warm hand. "Where did you think of going, dear child, and what are you going to do?" she asked.

Kathleen was silent for a moment. These were practical questions such as Mrs. Hovey might be expected to ask.

"We would gladly keep you here as long as you wished to stay," Mrs. Hovey went on, "but your aunt and uncle will want you back and they have a right to order your goings and comings till you are of age. They live so near that it would be very embarrassing for you."

"They don't want me. They are trying to get rid of me," returned Kathleen struggling hard to keep back the tears.

"Your aunt wants you, I am sure. In her way she is very fond of you, but your uncle wants his sister, too, and, as she is rather well off and will add to the family income, I am pretty sure that she will stay on, now that her son is married. We needn't disguise the fact, here between ourselves, that money is a considerable object to your aunt and uncle, more to your uncle, however; yet I am very sure, whatever Mrs. Stebbins may say, that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Wyatt would be willing to see a young girl like you thrown out upon the world unprotected and unprovided for."

"Do you think I should go back now?" Kathleen's lips quivered.

"I don't blame you for feeling just that way, and perhaps you will not need to. You are by no means friendless, dear child. There are several who take a very deep interest in your welfare, and I am quite sure, if your aunt's consent can once be gained, that something can be done about this matter. You came away without telling her, I suppose."

"Yes," Kathleen acknowledged. "She sent me to my room, yet I don't think she was so very angry with me."

"Her object was to get you away from reach of Mrs. Stebbins' unkind remarks, very likely. It is sometimes difficult to steer between two courses, you see."

"I had not thought of that," returned Kathleen soberly. "We were getting along better, all of us, before Mrs. Stebbins came, and I was trying, I was really trying very hard to glorify work and to be happy. I believe I might have succeeded in time, though you know, dear Mother Hovey, that I am not made of such stuff as my aunt and uncle would have me, and there would have to come a break some day."

"I realize that, but it might have come gradually when you and they were better prepared for it."

"But I cannot go back to-day. Oh, please don't say I must. I cannot." Kathleen's slim fingers clasped Mrs. Hovey's convulsively.

"That is as it may chance to work out. Just now I think you'd better not."

"I thought I would write to Miss Bolton and to Judy and perhaps they could get me something to do in the city."

Mrs. Hovey shook her head. "We won't think of that right at first. Let me think a minute and see if I can't get at some better plan." She sat stroking Kathleen's hand soothingly. Ray on the other side was holding the other hand, and Kathleen was fast regaining hope and composure.

Presently Mrs. Hovey spoke. "Mrs. Baxter would be glad to have you make her a visit, wouldn't she?"

"Cousin Almira Baxter? Oh, yes, she has been urging me to come. Every time I see her she speaks of it and asks me why I can't."

"Then why not go now? I am sure she will not mind if you take her by surprise, and it will be a safe, pleasant, quiet place for you to stay till something can be settled. You can send word to your aunt to get her consent, and after dinner we can go."

"And it will be near enough for you to come to the Council Fire," Ray spoke up.

For the first time Kathleen smiled and gave Ray's dumpling of a hand a loving squeeze. "You dear little comforter," she said.

"Now then," Mrs. Hovey arose, "I will send word to your aunt that you are going to stay here to dinner; I don't believe she will object, considering how things have gone. Meanwhile you can be writing her a note which we can send over."

"You mustn't think of going with me," Kathleen protested. "I can easily walk there; it will do me good this lovely day."

"Under ordinary circumstances I shouldn't object in the least," Mrs. Hovey smiled, "but as I am a mother, and am thinking what I should like if it were one of my daughters who had come to this pass, I shall feel much more comfortable if I go with you. I am pretty

sure your aunt will thank me, and," she added, "your own dear mother would."

The ready tears came to Kathleen's eyes as she put her arms around the dear woman's neck and laid her head on her ample bosom. "I can only say thank you, dear Mother Hovey," she said, "and I will do whatever you think best."

"Then go up-stairs and write your note while I see about our going. I can get the Eckerts to lend me their horse and buggy and we can easily jog out there in an hour."

Kathleen went up to the spare room, so suggestive of Miss Bolton and the first Camp-Fire meetings. She sat down at the writing table, her head in her hands, keeping very still for a few minutes, then she whispered softly the Fire Maker's Desire :

"As fuel is brought to the fire
So I purpose to bring
My strength,
My ambition,
My heart's desire,
My joy
And my sorrow
To the fire
Of humankind.
For I will tend
As my fathers have tended
And my father's fathers

Since time began
The fire that is called
The love of man for man,
The love of man for God."

Then very quietly she wrote her note, a very different one from that which it had been her first intention to write.

"DEAR AUNTIE:

"You must not think me ungrateful when I say that I want to go away for a while. I do love you and want to please you, but I am so miserably unhappy, and after this morning have made up my mind that it is absolutely impossible for me to live in peace with——" [Here she paused. She could not say "Aunt Maria"; she did not like to say "Mrs. Stebbins," but presently she went on:] "all the members of the household. I have tried to do my very best and to keep silence when I was hurt and insulted, but I can bear it no longer, and I thought of going to Cousin Almira Baxter's if you would allow me. She has been wanting me to make her a visit, as you know, and perhaps I could stay till I saw my way clear to earning my living. I hope you will approve of this. I want to be independent and am willing to work hard. If I go Mrs. Hovey will take me.

"Your loving niece,
"KATHLEEN."

She folded the note and took it down to show Mrs. Hovey. As she entered the kitchen she saw standing there no less person than Jimmy. Mrs. Hovey was

saying to him: "Jimmy, I called you over to ask if you would tell your mother that Kathleen is over here, and that we would like to have her stay to dinner, if she does not object."

"She'll let her," blurted out Jimmy with a frown. "I say, Kath," he went on, catching sight of his cousin, "they had it hot and heavy after you went out. Gee, but Aunt Maria was in a pepper-jig. Just you wait till I'm a man, old girl, and you'll see." Just what she would see was not made obvious, but he meant well. He promised to deliver the note and the message promptly and made an abrupt exit.

"I'm fond of Jimmy," said Kathleen as she looked wistfully after him. "I shall hate to leave him. There are the makings of a good man in the boy."

"We all know that," Mrs. Hovey assured her, "and he'll improve right along, you'll see."

In a short time Jimmy was back again. "Mother says to tell you to go." He gave the message briefly, and was off in a trice.

Kathleen drew a sigh. She could not tell whether the message was sent in a spirit of anger or of kindness, but whichever it might be the meaning was plain enough, so she climbed into the buggy with Mrs. Hovey who said, as they started off, "We will not tell any one that you think of doing more than making a

visit to your cousin. There will be time enough for gossip and comment when something really startling happens."

That something startling was really to happen to her Kathleen little imagined as she turned the horse's head toward the old farm.

CHAPTER XXI

A CORN FESTIVAL

AS Mrs. Hovey jogged back to Brightwood she felt satisfied that no better haven of refuge could have been found for a nervous, excited girl than the peaceful, quiet home of Mrs. Baxter. Here lived the gentle old lady with her bachelor brother, an elderly man, gentle and kindly like herself. A woman who had been with them many years looked after affairs in the kitchen and was assisted by her niece, a sturdy, capable country girl. In the tenant house a short distance away lived the man who did the better part of the work on the farm, and everything ran smoothly and pleasantly, as Kathleen discovered by the time she had spent a day with these cousins.

Cousin Almira had received her with open arms, and required very little explanation from Mrs. Hovey before understanding the situation. "The child would be welcome for her mother's sake even if I did not already love her for her own," said Cousin Almira, patting Kathleen's hand. "I loved Lucy Townley very dearly

and her daughter is much like her. I have been longing for this visit from you, my dear," she smiled at Kathleen. "I was speaking to brother Noah about you only a few days ago, and we were both saying how agreeable it would be to have a young person about the house."

So Mrs. Hovey drove off well content, and Kathleen was taken up to a neat quiet room where she was told to make herself at home. From one of the windows she could get a glimpse of the mountain, though not so extended a view as from her attic room. The other window looked out upon the old garden now bereft of all blooms except a few valiant zinnias and fearless chrysanthemums. Kathleen arranged her few belongings, wondering how long they would find place where she put them, then she wrote a hasty note to Judy and one to Miss Bolton. This done, all at once she felt very tired and was glad that Cousin Almira had insisted that she should lie down and rest before she came downstairs. The house was so still, the warm room, with its old-fashioned appointments, so restful, that although her mind was teeming with new thoughts and sensations, she fell asleep and awoke refreshed and calmed. The hours of the evening slipped serenely by in reminiscent talk, and by bedtime Kathleen felt at home in an atmosphere of protecting affection.

The next afternoon came Judy, all alive with news, and eagerness itself to impart it. She came dancing in, caught Kathleen by the shoulders, gave her a kiss and held her off at arm's length. "You look better already," she cried. "Oh, Kathleen, what exciting times you must have had. It has been exciting for me, too. Come let us sit down and I will tell you all about it. First let me return a piece of borrowed property." She handed Kathleen a small roll of paper, as the two sat down together.

Kathleen unrolled the paper disclosing a design of daffodils which she had made in secret, thinking that some day she might stencil it as a border for that now forsaken attic room. "Judy, you bad child, where did you get this?" she asked.

"I borrowed it," explained Judy with a laugh. "I saw it in your room one day and I wanted to show it to some one. I knew perfectly well you were too modest to let me have it if I asked. You see there is your name on the back, so there is no use in your denying that you did it."

"Yes, I did it," returned Kathleen. "I thought if I ever did do anything to that attic room I should like to have a border all around of daffodils, the symbol of my Camp-Fire name."

"Lovely, but we won't talk about that now. It

shows so much talent, truly it does, Kathleen; you needn't shake your head, and so I showed it to Mr. Furnival. I told you how pleased he was with the way you did the parlor, and I thought it might be worth while to interest him still further. Well, it has been worth while, for as soon as I heard from you this morning I rushed straight down to his office and we talked you over. Oh, Kathleen, it is so lovely." She leaned over and gave her companion a hasty peck on the cheek. "What do you think?"

"Oh, Judy, how can I guess?"

"Well, it happened that I was going to exactly the right person, for Mr. Furnival is director, or something important, of the School of Design. He said that a new scholarship had just been given and he didn't think it was filled, so he called up at once two or three people, and they all promised to vote for any one he might suggest, and the candidate—Kathleen, who is the candidate?"

"Not—not ——" Kathleen began tremulously.

"You!" Judy shot out the assurance. "Yes, it is no less a person than Kathleen Gilman, and ——"

"Oh, but Judy," Kathleen's bright dream soon faded, "how can I do such a thing? I have no money to pay board in the city or to buy materials or anything like

that. It would be the most wonderful and delightful thing that could possibly happen, but how could a poor poverty-stricken creature like me accept it? When I go to the city it must be to get something to do which will earn me my living."

"Now, don't go so fast. Here is where little sister Judy comes in. It is all settled that you are to spend the winter with me. Now, don't put on that proud and haughty look, for you are going to do it. I will bring you a written invitation signed by both my parents, if you insist, but here is the verbal one: Mr. and Mrs. Falkner request the pleasure of your company for an unlimited period at their residence, five hundred and six Fairview Avenue."

"Oh, but Judy—but Judy ——" began Kathleen.

"Just hear me out, old interrupter. You know I have my own allowance and I want you to let me supply the materials you will need. If my little sister had lived she would probably have had anything that I could give her if she wanted it, and you know we made a compact that we would be sisters. It is for my own selfish enjoyment that I am doing it, anyway. Don't you love me enough to give me such a pleasure, Kathleen?"

"Oh, Judy, I do love you; you know I do, but this is such overpowering generosity."

"Why, no, it isn't; you have forgotten those lines of Adelaide Proctor's:

" "I hold him great who for love's sake
Can give with earnest, gen'rous will,
But he who takes for love's sweet sake,
I think I hold more gen'rous still."

"Now, having done with the question of generosity, let us go back to the scholarship. It is for the whole course, and you are to study interior decoration which will open a future for you more quickly than actual picture painting. By the time you are through I shall have tired of my gray walls and shall want my room done over, so I engage you on the spot to do it."

"I might do it and partly pay my debt to you that way." Kathleen spoke eagerly.

"Oh, Kathleen, you independent piece; you will take all the fun out of it. I was thinking with so much glee of the nice fat check I should make papa turn over to you. However, by that time I hope you will be more reasonable. Do you like my news, Thurénsera, dear?"

"Oh, Judy, if you knew, if you knew!" Kathleen put her head down on the back of the sofa and burst into a flood of tears.

Realizing that she was overwrought, nervous, and

that she had been through a trying ordeal, Judy did not attempt to stay the tears, but put her arm gently around the weeping girl and laid her cheek against the bright hair.

Presently Kathleen looked up with a smile breaking through the tears. "Do you remember the 'Old Gray Bonnet'?" she asked, and quoted, "'They're not tears of sadness, Cyrus; they are tears of gladness.'"

Judy laughed. "That takes me back to your Camp-Fire song. We'll be singing it again on Saturday, Kathleen."

A little cloud passed over Kathleen's face as she thought that she would soon be parted from her companions of the Ohuanuáh-Nah Camp-Fire, but, as if partly reading her thought, Judy said: "You will see Miss Bolton often when you go to town, and you will love Miss Keene, for of course you will come with me to our Camp-Fire meetings, and need not give up your affiliation with your own Camp-Fire unless you choose."

There was comfort in this and Kathleen was on the verge of tears again as she thought of the benefits piled upon her. After her days of drudgery, misunderstanding and disapproval to suddenly enter into this atmosphere of appreciation and affection was almost too much for her. "Judy," she said in a voice shaken

with emotion, "I don't see what I can ever do to show you what all this means to me, but perhaps some day I can prove my appreciation and gratitude."

"Don't speak of gratitude," said Judy with an impatient shake of the head. "Only love me a little; that is all I want."

"I shall do that to the end of my days," returned Kathleen solemnly.

Here Cousin Almira appeared and the news must be told her. She entered heartily into it, although she said a little wistfully: "I had hoped to keep this dear child with me for a long, long visit, but, my dear," she laid her hand on Kathleen's, "you must come back to me and finish it out when your school work is over."

This was again almost too much for Kathleen, but she controlled herself and bent her head to kiss the wrinkled hand which lay upon hers. "I don't deserve such kindness from you all," she said.

"Oh, yes, you do," returned Judy cheerfully, "and besides it is not all on your side; we are getting a lot out of it, aren't we, Mrs. Baxter?"

The old lady laughed. "That is the way to look at it," she answered.

After more talk Judy declared she must tear herself away, and Kathleen was left alone with Cousin Almira. There was one thing which troubled the girl, a thing

of which Judy had not thought, and of which Kathleen could not speak. To Judy suitable clothes came as naturally as the air she breathed and it never occurred to her that a lack of them might be a serious obstacle in the way of Kathleen's acceptance of the plans made for her. Before the open fire Cousin Almira drew up her chair while Kathleen took another opposite. The girl was very thoughtful, and her cousin could see that some weighty matter was absorbing her. The old lady glanced at her companion now and again, but bided her time to speak. Kathleen sat looking into the fire for a while, then she took a wistful survey of the room. After all if she must give up the larger ambition here was surely a peaceful haven. From the walls dim, age-stained portraits looked down at her; the pieces of furniture, what scenes of joy and sorrow must have been shared in their presence, old heirlooms as they were. The fire burned cheerily, the old gray cat dozed comfortably in front of it. Outside the November twilight was gathering. Kathleen gave a long sigh and then answered her cousin's look with a smile.

"Well, dear, what is it?" asked Mrs. Baxter. "Have you planned out every day of your life since you have been sitting there in such a brown study?"

"No indeed, Cousin Almira, but I have been thinking of the plan Judy proposed. She was so enthusi-

astic that I am afraid I was carried away by it and forgot that there might be obstacles."

"She certainly did make it seem very possible and desirable," returned Mrs. Baxter. "Suppose we talk about the obstacles. Two heads are better than one, you know. What stands in your way?"

Kathleen hesitated a moment before she said, "I am afraid Judy's parents will be ashamed of as poorly dressed a visitor as I shall be. I have nothing very nice, nothing that wouldn't seem very poor indeed in that house."

"That is something to think about," acknowledged Mrs. Baxter, "although you must realize that they cannot expect you will dress in the same style as their daughter. I think they will not expect you to do more than dress plainly and neatly. Suppose we run over the list of your requirements and see how nearly your wardrobe meets it. You should have a nice street suit of course, something to wear every day to your school, a house dress or two which you could wear evenings, and something more dressy for any entertainment you may happen to attend. Have you those?"

"I haven't but two winter frocks to my name," returned Kathleen shamefacedly. "I have grown so fast, you see. I think this one I have on will do to

wear to the school, and the other I can wear, too, with a coat. Margaret helped me alter it from one of Aunt Sue's and it doesn't look so very bad. I have a light summer frock which I could lengthen and it would do to wear sometimes."

"You should have hats, too, one for every day and one for best."

"The one I have will do for every day."

Mrs. Baxter sat back in her chair and rocked silently for a few minutes before she spoke. "To-morrow we will go up in the attic and see what I can find in my trunks. I am afraid the street suit is going to be the greatest difficulty, but if you and your friend Margaret can do the remodeling I am sure I can find materials which you can use."

Kathleen got up and went over to drop a kiss on her cousin's cheek. "I wonder why you are all so good to me," she said.

It was while they were up in the attic turning over the contents of chests and trunks the next afternoon that Mrs. Wyatt and Jimmy arrived. Kathleen started and turned pale when they were announced. "I wonder if they have come to take me home," she exclaimed.

"I don't believe it," Cousin Almira expressed her opinion. "Suppose we take these things down and

put them in your room, then we can talk them over later." She piled Kathleen's arms high and they descended to find Mrs. Wyatt and Jimmy waiting in the sitting-room by the open fire. It was not long before Jimmy was sent out to hunt up his Cousin Noah, who would be glad to show him about the place, Jimmy was assured, and Kathleen realized that her fate would soon be decided.

"I hope you don't think I did very wrong to come away," she began quaveringly.

"No, I don't," returned Mrs. Wyatt. "Whatever others may have thought I didn't blame you. Maria has a pretty sharp tongue, and she's got strong prejudices, but sometimes a thunder-storm clears the air. You'll come back?"

Kathleen shook her head doubtfully. "I don't know. I don't mind the work, you know I don't, Auntie, and if you really needed me it would be different, but now that Mrs. Stebbins, who is so much more capable, is with you I think we'd all be more comfortable if I were to stay away. Besides, I've another plan that I hope you'll approve." Then she launched out upon an account of the scholarship and what it might lead to, ending up with: "So you see I would have a profession and could earn my living."

Mrs. Wyatt listened attentively, and sat think-

ing it all over after Kathleen had ceased speaking. "Well," she said at last, "I don't want it said that I have turned my own brother's child out of my house."

"No one could say that," spoke up Mrs. Baxter. "No one but Mrs. Hovey knows why Kathleen came away, and no one shall, although I suppose every one knows she couldn't be happy with Mrs. Stebbins."

"If you go you must leave from my house," said Mrs. Wyatt firmly. "I don't want it said that you are running away, or that you are going without our consent. When were you thinking about starting for the city?"

"As soon as I can get ready; I shall have to do some sewing first." Kathleen cast a quick glance at Cousin Almira.

"We were just looking over some things of mine," spoke up Mrs. Baxter. "It seems a shame to have them lying away doing no one good," she spoke tactfully, knowing Mrs. Wyatt's appreciation of economies, "and so I thought, as it was a family matter, we could use them right now. Suppose you come up, Susan, and see what you think."

Nothing could have been more diplomatic, and presently Mrs. Wyatt was discussing the possibilities of this garment and the desirability of that quite as if she had started the project herself. "That brown suit

will cut over real well," she said, "and it is such handsome cloth that it will do for best, and you can get a hat to match; I'll see that you have that. There's enough stuff here for two or three more frocks, so I don't see but you'll be pretty well fixed. Suppose you let me take that brown suit along to Miss Ripley, and when she's ready to fit you she can let you know. I'm sure, Cousin Almira, we're very much obliged to you for helping us out; what with my accident, and the fire, and one thing and another, we don't feel quite as well off as usual this fall."

"I understand that perfectly," replied Mrs. Baxter. "As a family we have a perfect right to stand by one another." So Mrs. Wyatt's pride was saved, Kathleen was provided for, and the whole dreaded interview passed off as mildly as possible.

As her aunt was leaving Kathleen put her arms around her and said, "Thank you a thousand times, Auntie."

"What for?" inquired Mrs. Wyatt.

"For allowing me to go to the city, and for promising me the hat, and for everything."

"Well, I'm sure that's not such a terrible lot. I guess I can see as well as any one that it is a great chance for you, and much as I want you at home, I wouldn't stand in the way of your good. Besides,

Maria and you could never pull in the same harness and it's better all around. Mind you come home a day or two before you start for the city, and don't forget Miss Ripley will want you. I suppose you're going to that frolic on Saturday."

"Oh, yes, indeed; I couldn't miss that."

"Well, I'm glad you can go and that you've made such friends." So she drove off with Jimmy, leaving a very happy and thankful Kathleen behind.

From this time on until the day of her departure from Brightwood something was happening every day for Kathleen. Ray and Tilda walked out from the village to listen with excited interest to the new plan, and to offer their services in getting the sewing done. They went off to make arrangements for a "shower" which the Camp-Fire Girls decided that Kathleen must have given her before she could be properly fitted out for her stay in the city. This eventuated in a sewing bee at the Hoveys', when some pretty undergarments were begun for the "shower." Then Margaret spent a couple of days with Kathleen at Mrs. Baxter's that she might use her clever fingers in fashioning something pretty from the frocks which had been resurrected from the attic chests. But the best of all happenings was the Corn Festival which, after all, did not take place on the day expected, for upon that day

the rains descended and it was decided that, even with the barn as a refuge, it would be better to wait another week, and no one regretted the delay when the time did come, for lovelier weather could not have been. It was one of those rare days which we call "weather breeders," with the softest of blue skies, the balmiest of airs, the tenderest of coloring. The browns and purples of the mountain blurred together under a soft haze, the yellow of fields sobered to a quiet hue, only the flame colored pumpkins lying alongside the whispering shocks of corn gave accent to the picture.

On this day Margaret became a Torch Bearer. On this day new songs were sung, new legends recited, new folk dances given. Miss Keene talked as one inspired. Miss Bolton touched them by her earnestness. Tilda outdid herself in entertaining. Never was such a feast, never such a barn frolic. To this last the boys were invited; the Furnivals came and brought Mr. Munroe who surprised them all by playing weird Indian melodies upon his violin.

"Oh, it has been such a wonderful time," said Kathleen to Judy, "and to crown it all, Judy, you are coming home with me. Cousin Almira begs that you will."

"The dear!" exclaimed Judy. "The Furnivals are full up, and will be content to let me off. What a talk we can have, Thurénsera."

"And what joy to have all day to-morrow together, Iwaterusch."

"And what a joy upon joy that we shall have many more together."

"Hark, we are to sing the closing hymn," said Kathleen.

Silence fell upon them all for a moment, and then a sweet, clear voice started the song in which all the girls joined :

"Lay me to sleep in sheltering flame,
O Master of the Hidden Fire.
Wash pure my heart and cleanse for me
My soul's desire.

"In flame of sunrise bathe my mind,
O Master of the Hidden Fire,
That when I wake, clear-eyed may be
My soul's desire."

Under the luminous stars they gathered to take the ride home, the Brightwood boys and girls in big, straw-strewn wagons, the rest in automobiles from Weston.

"We can send you and Kathleen home and the car can come back here for us," said Mrs. Furnival to Judy.

So off started Judy and Kathleen ahead. They sat with hands clasped, but saying little. The big wagons

clattered along behind. From them arose joyous peals of laughter, snatches of song, hearty cheers. At the turning of the road shouts of "Good-night! Good-night!" followed the swift-moving car. Then upon the quiet night came more faintly: "Wohelo! Wohelo!"

Judy and Kathleen turned in their places to answer: "Wohelo! Wohelo!" And then the mountains took up the cry, echoing back more faintly still: "Wohelo! Wohelo! Helo! Lo!"

And so it was love which outlasted everything else.

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